Anne Lamott, in her book Bird by Bird, told the story of her brother who had three months to write a report on birds but waited until the day before it was due in starting his report. As her brother suddenly found himself close to tears, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead, his father sat down beside him, and said, “Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.”

As graduate students, you may be confronted by the hugeness of the task ahead -- classes, qualifying exam, proposal, dissertation, and not to mention your everyday life responsibilities. So how are you going to make it? Faculty in EDLD are developing supports that will help students overcome challenges encountered in their doctoral studies. We are not making it easier, but we do want make the demands manageable.

Here are a few of the changes that you will be seeing in EDLD.

- Dr. Patti Wilkins will assume the Graduate Program Director position for the EdD. Dr. Wilkins is an alumnus of the program and will have a lot of insider information on how to succeed.
- A two-year course schedule is now available. You should be able to plan your courses and determine your schedule ahead of time.
- The EDLD office is now open Monday through Thursday until 6pm.
- We have three new faculty starting in Fall 2016 (page 2).

If you have additional suggestions for enhancing the doctoral program, please email me at ClaudiaFlowers@uncc.edu.

-- Claudia Flowers

Claudia Flowers has been at UNC Charlotte for 21 years as a research faculty member. She recently assumed the Chair of Educational Leadership when Dr. Alan Mabe was named the Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). She teaches the statistics courses and has served on over 100 dissertation committees. Her research interest is assessment of students with disabilities.
Spotlight on EDLD Faculty

Welcoming New Faculty

Tracey Benson, Ed.D.

Education
Ed.D Educational Leadership, Harvard University (2016)

Experience
Classroom teacher, vice-principal at the middle school level, principal at the high school level; professional development specialist at the district level

Research Interests
Understanding racialized context in which educators operate and systems alignment and equity in access and outcomes

Ayesha Sadaf, Ph.D.

Education
Ph.D. Learning Design & Technology, Purdue University (2013)

Experience
Assistant professor at Ball State University with three years experience as a classroom teacher; worked as an evaluation and assessment administrative and online course design consultant

Research Interests
Preservice teachers’ use of technology and online instruction

Ryan Miller, Ph.D.

Education
Ph.D. Higher Education, University of Texas at Austin (2015)

Experience
Director of the Office of Institutional Equity at the University of Texas at Austin with eight years experience in student affairs and higher education administration

Research Interests
Leadership for creating inclusive campus cultures in higher education

Recognizing Outstanding Faculty

Dr. Richard Lambert

2016 College of Education Award for Excellence in Research

Dr. Jim Watson

2016 Faculty Award for Sustained Service to Public Schools
The Educational Leadership Department hosted its Spring Doctoral Dinner for graduate students on February 23rd, 2016 at the Lucas Room 341, Cone University Center. The dinner brings together current and prospective doctoral students to meet and network with professors and administrators from the department.

The program this semester was centered on a panel discussion with Johnna Watson (associate dean), Dr. Sandra Dika, Sabrina Brown (graduate student), and Dr. Mark D’Amico on opportunities for graduate school funding and scholarships, coursework and dissertation schedules, roles of faculty advisers, tuition, student challenges, career options, and campus resources available for students. Dr. Valorie McAlpin (former graduate program coordinator) facilitated the Q&A during the forum. As always, there were big smiles from the audience. Faculty spotted among the crowd were Dr. Chuang Wang, Dr. Debra Morris, Dr. Jim Bird, Dr. Lim, Dr. Mark D’Amico, Dr. Sandra Dika, Dr. Claudia Flowers, Dr. Jim Watson, Dr. Patti Wilkins, and Dr. Leslie Zenk.

A special thanks to all who attended the dinner and brought prospective students along. Looking forward to seeing you at the next doctoral dinner in the Fall of 2016. The schedule will be announced in August.
Get Involved
Kiran Budhrani and Monica Allen, Ed.D. Students

Collaboration Among Doctoral Students’ Research Interests

Last month, selected doctoral students from Educational Leadership and Urban Education created an online spreadsheet on Doctoral Students Research Interests to generate a list of doctoral students from the College of Education with their corresponding research interests and contact information. To date, there are over 30 students who have added their name. Through this expanding spreadsheet, you can locate other students with similar research interests and with whom you can possibly collaborate with for research projects, publications, conference presentations, etc. You may access the spreadsheet anytime to add your name or update your information.

EDLD Student Organization

In the recent survey led by Monica Allen, 93% of students showed interest in having a formal student organization for Educational Leadership students. If you are interested to help establish the student organization this Fall 2016, please contact Monica Allen at mallen86@uncc.edu by May 11th, 2016.

Conversations among Urban Education and Educational Leadership Students

The 4th Annual Conversations in Urban Education Poster Session took place on March 30th, 2016 from 3:45-5pm in the main lobby of the College of Education. This event brought doctoral students from Urban Education and Educational Leadership together to share their research interests on classroom best practices, culturally relevant pedagogy, alternative school models, English language learners, policy vs. practice, and achievement ratings. Look forward to participate in this event next year.

16th Annual Graduate Research Symposium

The Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) organizes an annual symposium to encourage graduate students to conduct oral and poster presentations. This year, it was held on April 2, 2016. Two students from Educational Leadership participated:

1. Kaitlyn A. Herthel (oral presentation)
   Her oral presentation entitled Law in the Classroom?: The Impact of Teacher Training Program on Teacher’s Legal Knowledge garnered an Honorable Mention award among those from the Humanities, Education, and the Arts.

2. Neda Pouraskari (poster presentation)
   Presented her poster on Female Transfer Engineering Students, Stay or Leave?

Newsletter Contributions

If you are interested in submitting articles for our newsletter, the Ed.D. Ledger, beginning Fall 2016, please contact Kiran Budhrani at kbudhran@uncc.edu by May 18th, 2016.

CALENDAR REMINDERS

- May 16: Academic Year Ends
- May 23: First Day of Classes (1st Summer)
- May 30: Memorial Day - No Classes
- July 5: First Day of Classes (2nd Summer)
- August 22: First Day of Classes (Fall)
- August 29: Last day to register, add, drop with no grade via the web
- September 5: Labor Day - University Closed
Preparing for Qualifying Exams
Kiranj Budhrani, Ed.D. Student

Qualifying exams are nearing. Similarly for many graduate students, this can be an uncertain and stressful phase. Personally, any semblance of the word e-x-a-m makes me anxious. I can already feel symptoms of the impostor syndrome surfacing because unlike other exams where the expected answer is based on syllabi, I know the qualifying exam requires a different type of mindset and preparation.

At the Educational Leadership department, qualifying exams are offered twice a year:

- **In Summer:** July 1 to July 31, 2016 (writing) and August 15 to September 15, 2016 (orals); or
- **In Spring:** February 1 to February 28, 2017 (writing) and March 15 to April 15, 2017 (orals).

If it was me, I would like to find out everything I can about what to expect during the exam to organize and prepare accordingly. Googling this topic will lead you to many helpful resources from current and past doctoral students from different universities. I personally like the advice from the University of Oregon, Inside Higher Ed, UC Berkeley, and UC Davis.

Here are six tips to help you prepare:

1. **Establish an Exam Mindset**
2. **Know the Expectations**
3. **Keep a Reading List**
4. **Study Systematically with Peers**
5. **Write a Good Story about Your Interest**
6. **Talk to Other Students**

As educators, we can appreciate the purpose and intent of the qualifying exam. The article from UC Berkeley quotes that in a qualifying exam:

> It’s not just a question of what you know, it’s a question of being able to impart what you know.

Our doctoral handbook provides a very detailed explanation of the purpose and procedure for the qualifying exam. Students should take the exam as soon as possible after completing 24 credit hours of coursework and not later than 36 credit hours of coursework. The written and oral qualifying examinations allow students to demonstrate:

1. Understanding of the body of knowledge addressed in the initial portion of the doctoral program;
2. Ability to integrate and apply this knowledge;
3. Understanding of the tools of academic scholarship;
4. Skills of written and oral expression; and,
5. Potential for success in the remaining coursework and on the dissertation.

If you are planning to write work on your qualifying exams this summer, several students are planning a group study starting May to prepare. If you are interested in joining them, please express your interest to Carolyn Salanger at Carolyn.salanger@uncc.edu by May 10th, 2016. The first meeting will be on Saturday, May 14th, 2016 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Further information will be shared with those who reach out to Carolyn. Good luck!

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Good Vibes from the Pinterest Boards to End the Academic Year

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