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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how one North Carolina state university redefined its educational leadership program after facing state demands to alter leadership preparation. Concurrent with other national initiatives to reform preparation of school leaders, this initiative was designed to rethink the purpose and function of leadership preparation. After reorganizing the school of education, launching a revised masters of school administration (MSA) program, and combining three programs (the Ed.D., MSA in educational leadership, and Ph.D. in cultural foundations) under one department, the department began a review of the programs. A departmental statement of beliefs was developed to examine program elements; this manifesto helped articulate core beliefs and build understanding and connections between the leadership and faculty. Issues of course content and pedagogy, writing and research, hiring practices, and admissions practices were examined. The paper offers the redesign of an Ed.D. internship as one example of how the manifesto was implemented. The internship is built around a series of activities that involve--shadowing, participation in practice, advocacy, and critical reflection. All of these are designed to provide students with an opportunity to experience leadership and reflect upon its consequences. (Contains 19 references.) (SM)

Democracy is Hard Work: The Struggle to Define One Leadership Preparation Program

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Around the nation educational leadership programs are confronted by demands to reexamine their role and function (Achilles, 1994; Boyan, 1981; Haller, Brent & McNamara, 1997; Thomson, 1993) and their effectiveness (Kempner, 1991; Thurston, Clift & Schact, 1993). Dissatisfaction led to development of recommendations for their modification (Griffiths, Stout & Forsysth, 1998; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989; National Commission for the Principalship, 1990) and articulation of the knowledge, skills and predispositions required of contemporary school leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

Dissatisfaction was not limited to just the structure and content of preparation programs. Serious questions were also raised about the role of universities in the training of school leaders (Achilles, 1994; Haller, Brent & McNamara, 1997; Schneider, 1998).

Failing to respond to these questions Educational leadership programs who were slow to respond found themselves reacting to state and university initiatives for reform. Despite the nearly universal recognition of the need to reform, few programs have embraced the challenge and initiated change. Some modified course offerings or field-based experiences, others ignored the nearly universal demand for change. A few launched substantive reviews of their program including the underlying principles on which the program was built (Achilles, 1999).

This is the story of one such program. Located at a medium sized state supported university in North Carolina, the program was confronted by state demands to alter leadership preparation. In response to these realities an initiative was launched to rethink the purpose and function of leadership preparation at this site. The first step included development of a statement of beliefs. Once completed, the statement of beliefs would serve as one important element to examine the structure of program elements (e.g., course offerings, hiring practices, research, field experiences, admissions).

A Cauldron of Change

Concurrent with national initiatives to reform the preparation of school leaders North Carolina launched a number of initiatives which together provoked at least superficial change in university programs. The included:

- Legislative recommendations including redesign of preparation programs at state supported universities, articulation of state standards for school leaders, and revision of licensure procedures (Quality Candidate Committee, 1994);
- New programs with an emphasis on a core of knowledge and skills grounded in practice, the use of varied instructional methods, and the integration of clinical components throughout the program (Williamson & Hudson, 1998);
- Changes in licensure requirements which eliminated "certification only" programs and required a Masters of School Administration degree;
- Identification of ten standards for school leaders each of which identified what school leader's should believe, know and be able to do (North Carolina Standards Board, 1998); these standards, while slightly different, paralleled the national standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (1996);
- Implementation of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Assessment, a problem-based examination developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) under the guidance of the Council of Chief State School Officers as a licensure requirement;
- Introduction of state guidelines for newly designed program components, including the requirement for the equivalent of a year-long internship for all graduates.

These initiatives were addressed by the university at the same time it was responding to a reorganization of the School of Education. In order to conserve resources and provoke greater interdepartmental collaboration, the school combined departments. This reorganization merged the Department of

Educational Leadership and the Cultural Foundations program creating a new administrative unit of programs previously separate.

Emerging from the Cauldron

These changes at the state and university uncovered a number of tensions and contradictions. Student enrollment declined in some programs, partly due to uncertainty about the changes and the failure to promote certain programs. Faculty were anxious about the continued viability of their programs. The merger of two disparate programs led to tension about allocation of resources and priorities in the newly formed department.

In this context, the university applied for one of the revised Masters of School Administration programs. One of seven initially approved by the state, the program included a set of core classes required of all students and incorporated practice-based instructional strategies. It also included a full-year internship and presentation of an exit portfolio where students reflect on their training and document how their beliefs about education and school leadership have developed (Hudson & Williamson, 1999).

Launching the newly designed program was the initial and immediate concern. Longer-term concern focused on integration of the newly authorized masters program with other school leadership programs and with other programs offered by the department.

In 1998, the department committed to a review of each program---the Ed.D, the MSA in educational leadership, and the Ph.D. in cultural foundations. In separate conversations at retreats and department meetings, faculty grappled with the principles which underlay the Ed.D and MSA programs, particularly in the context of a department including foundations. Once articulated, questions of how those principles manifested themselves in tangible program components emerged.

The Manifesto

Preliminary to other activities the department embarked on articulation of beliefs to guide our work. In this attempt to define our mission we wrestled with how specific we could / should be about the values we want our graduates to acquire while in our programs. Several questions guided this work:

- Should our programs be grounded in inquiry or should they be explicit about advocating for the values of democracy and social transformation?
- Should our programs promote leadership for critical pedagogy in schools or should they focus on pedagogy that produces high standardized test scores?

Conversations were initially guarded, reflecting the realities of higher education---seniority, rank, competition for students, control of courses and curriculum, perceived power. The discussions were occasionally contentious, revealing a variety of points-of-view and concerns for influence and power. Over time, the initial tension dissipated and these efforts at collaborative work in a competitive environment yielded the manifesto described in Table 1.

Agreement on a statement of beliefs was but the first step, all be it, the most critical. The "manifesto" required faculty, in the most visible of ways, to espouse those principles which shape and guide their work with students. It became a tangible indicator of our priorities and a measure against which all other program activities might be gauged. It led naturally to further debate and deliberation.

Questions Provoked by the Manifesto

The department is comprised of a number of programs (e.g., Masters of School Administration, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Philosophy). Subsequent to agreement on a departmental statement, individual programs began to examine the principles on which they were grounded. This examination occurred in program groups and sub-committees as well as the more public context of department meetings and retreats.

Table 1

Statement of Departmental Beliefs

The Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations is committed to the development of a just and caring democratic society in which schools serve as centers of inquiry and forces for social transformation. We believe that:

- education is an ongoing process of knowledge creation and acquisition, lived experience, interaction with others, and conscious reflection;
- good schooling and a good society create occasions for people to build human, intellectual, and spiritual connections;
- schools must foster social, economic, and educational equity;
- honoring differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, and ability are critical to human understanding;
- every human being is worthy of respect and deserving of dignity.

Our purpose is to create educational leaders who work with parents, staff, students, and communities to develop critical understandings of the assumptions, beliefs, and regularities that support schooling and who identify and create practices that allow schools to function more fully as democracies while preparing students for democracy. We believe educational leaders ought to:

- advocate for teaching and learning by articulating and working to achieve a school-community's shared educational commitments;
- facilitate processes that engage self and others in critiquing the way things are, exploring the way life should be in moral and just communities, and stimulating action directed toward achieving the latter;
- mobilize economic, political, social, and personal resources to articulate and achieve a school-community's shared educational commitments;
- appreciate the joy of learning in their lives, delight in the growth of self and others, promote the love of learning, and create practices in schools that provide an outstanding education for all students.

An example of this process at work was examination of the Masters in School Administration (MSA) program, the department's largest program. Program and then department faculty began to discuss core values and principles which would guide program refinement.

While still under review, the departmental belief statement is clearly reflected in the proposed core values and principles of the MSA program (Table 2). As faculty worked to refine the statement, attention was paid to the link between the departmental statement and the way individual programs manifested themselves (e.g., course content, assignment of faculty to courses, student admissions).

While individual programs revise statements about beliefs and principles, the larger and more substantive questions emerge from examining the regularities of life in a university setting. Adoption of belief statements must lead to changes in practice or they become mere artifacts, adopted but never actualized.

These first steps at clarifying beliefs lead to further questions---questions about the way our stated beliefs would be reflected in the day-to-day regularities of university life. They include:

- How do these beliefs alter the content and pedagogy of course work experienced by students in our programs?
- What is the nature and focus of writing and research conducted by both students and faculty in the department?
- What factors do we consider when selecting faculty? What processes do we utilize to make such decisions?
- What standards do we use to admit students to our degree programs? What processes do we use to make such decisions?
- What is the nature of field-based experiences and how do they reflect our commitment to these beliefs and principles?

(Williamson & Hudson, 1999a, 2000)

Table 2

Draft Statement of Proposed Core Beliefs and Principles
Masters of School Administration Program

Masters of School Administration Graduates . . .

Moral Vision:
- will be able to develop, articulate, and bring to fruition an understanding of what an exemplary school is;
- will be able to discern contextual understandings of what a good school is and know how to achieve them;
- will be open to a range of options and alternatives regarding schooling;
- will have a deep understanding of and commitment to their moral responsibility as educators including:
  democracy: will be able to develop, articulate, and enact a vision of a democratic school;
  equity: will promote social equity;
  caring: will help to establish schools as caring communities

Leadership:
- will have honed their skills in leadership and administration;

Inquiry:
- will have inquiring minds;
- will be reflective about their practice;
- will challenge standards and orthodoxies for the sake of students and effective schooling;
- will promote the development of students' inquiring minds;
- will help to establish schools that are engaging and productive environments for all the persons associated with them (or all their members; i.e., teachers as well as students, and even administrators);

Teaching and Learning:
- will be serious about issues of teaching and learning in a way that is larger than the accountability systems of testing programs;
- will support and facilitate authentic instruction (learning and teaching), and caring and empowering personal relationships in schools;
- will promote the development of students' inquiring minds;

Community:
- will help create schools that are strong institutions within their local communities;
- will help to reclaim and lead the public discourse about education;

Accountability:
- will be able to lead schools which excel in academic achievement;
- will be able to help produce strong educational outcomes in the schools they administer;
- will understand and respond to their own accountability for school effectiveness;

Applying the Manifesto to our Work

Development of the manifesto served a useful purpose in articulating core beliefs of the department and helped to build understanding and connections between the leadership and the foundations faculty. Such a manifesto, however, becomes meaningful only when those beliefs become evident in practice.

As the department moved to address each of these areas we came to appreciate the lingering legacy of life in higher education. While we espouse the need to help aspiring school leaders counter the effects of socialization to their work in schools, we fail to confront the impact such socialization has on our own work. For example, while we espouse concepts such as justice, liberation and morality and decry the "oppression" of classes of citizens, we nevertheless participate fully in such a system in our own setting. We embrace seniority and past practice. We defer to experience and routine. We advocate for inclusiveness yet are exclusive. We speak for interdependence yet act independently. We espouse one set of beliefs and act contrary to those beliefs.

The questions articulated earlier reflect the depth of our conversations subsequent to adoption of the manifesto. They highlight the broad implications of such a statement on the way university departments conduct their work. One program component, the Ed.D. internship, will be explored in some detail later in the paper. Other applications of our beliefs will be examined briefly.

Course content and pedagogy

This department like most others is composed of several programs and a wide variety of courses. Our stated beliefs about inclusiveness and respect for diverse points-of-view have been tested when assiging faculty to teach courses. For example, recently a senior faculty member elected not to teach a course he taught for many years. It was suggested that a faculty member from the "other side" of the department, one with experience in the area, teach the course since it is required of many students. This suggestion provoked intense debate about the course "belonging" to one program in the department. At one

point in the discussion it was suggested that "no qualified faculty" were available to teach the course.

A department striving for greater collaboration and reduced divisiveness among programs must seek to overcome such barriers. The tension around courses, faculty assigned to teach courses, and the appropriateness of the background and experiences of faculty must be resolved if the manifesto is to become reality.

Implications for writing and research

Another area of intense debate centered on research and writing practices within the department. Central to the discussion was the purpose of research. Diverse points-of-view were articulated. They ranged from "contributing to the knowledge base" to "personal growth." Embedded in this discussion was the application of research to practice, particularly in a department with a mission to prepare school leaders.

The discussion was occasionally contentious. It often resulted in faculty adopting rigid positions, positions which discounted and minimized research methodologies and approaches which they don't embrace. For example, the department generally embraces qualitative approaches to research. Suggestions that quantitative methodology might be applicable is some times met with ridicule. During a recent discussion about selection of a candidate, one faculty member described a candidate's research this way, "It isn't even research."

Hiring practices

One of the most tangible ways in which a department demonstrates its belief in diverse points-of-view and articulates its belief in justice and humaneness is during the hiring process. During recent faculty searches the department grappled with these issues. For example, in a department which prepares school leaders, what is the value of school-based leadership experience?

One recent faculty discussion of potential candidates demonstrated the difficulty of applying our beliefs. It was suggested that one of the candidates might better seek admission as a student. During another search a candidate was asked how the leadership program might be enriched by the foundations program. The candidate offered several explicit suggestions. They were then asked how the foundations program might be enriched by leadership. No suggestions were offered. The candidate said, "I would have to think about that, I'm not sure about the connection." This position was embraced by some faculty as reflecting "exactly the beliefs we espouse." Sadly, adopting such a stance reinforces the division between programs and exacerbates the quest for greater understanding and collaboration.

Another consideration in discussions about hiring has been use of the term scholar. Some faculty describe themselves as a scholar in a particular field. However, when referring to candidates with a wealth of experience in school leadership the term scholar is rarely used. The implication is that practice, in this case school-based practice, is not scholarly work.

As with other areas each of these tensions must be addressed and overcome. Allowed to persist they have the potential to undermine and erode our continuing efforts for joint work and greater collaboration.

Admissions practices

Yet another area where our beliefs manifest themselves is in the admission of students to our programs. Who is it we serve? Do we admit students whose beliefs are consistent with ours? Do we honor (by admitting) students whom school districts identify as future leaders even if they may not espouse our beliefs? Is there a litmus test for admission and if so, how do we assure that students internalize these beliefs rather than merely recite them for our benefit?

Such questions are central to our work with students. As we grapple with whom we admit we also are confronted with the logistics of how many students we admit. Recently the department discussed admissions to the Ed.D. program. The number of students meeting our admission criteria has grown significantly

in recent years resulting in a record number of recommended admittances. One faculty member suggested that the number should be limited because "we had to limit the number in our program."

While this perspective may reflect the reality that limited resources (e.g., faculty, classes) limit admissions, it may also reflect the continuing competition between programs. Does the admission of more students to one program, particularly if it results in additional faculty, result in an imbalance of political power and influence?

Once more such tension must be resolved. Failure to discuss the underlying issues in a rush to avoid conflict and hurt feelings will ultimately lead to even further division between departmental programs.

Application of the Manifesto---One Example

A central component of both the MSA and the Ed.D. program at this university is the internship experience. For initial licensure, students are required to complete the equivalent of a year-long internship. For the Ed.D. program, leading to licensure as a central-office administrator, students must complete a further internship.

Students in our programs have articulated concern about the transition from course work to application in the field. Specifically they identified the socialization which occurs once they begin work at a school site (Williamson & Hudson, 1999b).

In order to reflect our agreed upon beliefs and to assist students in resisting the socialization inherent in field placements, the department began to rethink the internship experience. Our preliminary design for the Ed.D. internship illustrates the way in which our stated beliefs guide program redesign.

This redesign was built on the belief that the internship should include four components. They include:

1. shadowing---spending a day or two with each of three or four practicing administrators to understand the demands that are made on practitioners and how they respond;

2. participating in practice---assuming administrative responsibility for a variety of leadership tasks and projects under the watchful supervision of a practicing administrator;
3. advocacy---stimulating educational improvement and change by planning and implementing educational innovations in schools and districts;
4. critical reflection---participating individually, with other students, and with faculty in critical discourse about the shadowing, practice, and advocacy experiences.

The department considers the internship to be a series of activities, which together provide the student with the opportunity to both experience leadership and reflect upon its consequences, possibilities, and impact. Therefore, we believe that the internship does not occur in a single site; rather, it occurs in a variety of settings and contexts that broaden the student's understanding of educational practice and how school leaders foster equity, social justice, and democracy. We propose that, at a minimum, our students plan experiences that include:

- participation in a non-school, social service agency;
- participation in a school setting in a cultural context that is different from that in which the student is most familiar;
- a significant, long-term project that changes education practice in a school or district or beyond (e.g., state level community);
- participation in inquiry and planning that address real problems identify by school district(s);
- interactions with a variety of school leaders at all levels of administration in the district, region, and state.

Further, we believe that critical reflection is central to a student's preparation as a school leader. Our goal is to create habits of critical reflection and to cultivate school leaders for whom social activism is integral to educational practice. Therefore, the internship will provide opportunities for critical reflection. Such activities might include:

1. student initiated case studies of issues that occur during the internship;
2. faculty initiated case studies that problematize issues in administrative practice;
3. keeping a reflective journal;
4. critical analysis of the routines and structures that dominate administrative practice;
5. debriefing student experiences during the internship;
6. engaging in inquiry around issues that arise during the internship.

Applying these guidelines and beliefs results in an internship experience dramatically different from most. It engages the student in examining their own beliefs, in confronting the realities of diverse settings, and requires thoughtful analysis and reflection about the potential of leadership to impact social change. Table 3 details one potential internship experience. It reflects an appreciation for the multiple contexts in which students may work and the importance of critical reflection built around shadowing, practice, and advocacy. Such an internship requires that both student and university overcome the constraints usually associated with a field-based experience. Most students work full-time and hold challenging and demanding roles in public schools. To capitalize on the richness of such an experience ways, must be found to support such experiences outside of one's own school or district.

The Hard Work

Examining one's beliefs, seeking understanding of the beliefs of others, searching for common ground, seeking agreement and then acting on those shared beliefs is hard work. As this department continues to struggle with the task of reconceptualizing its programs, it inevitably leads to tests of our commitment to democracy, to critiquing the way things are, and to honoring differences.

A commitment to a more democratic setting manifests itself through thoughtful and critical deliberation. It also necessitates a commitment to one

Table 3
Internship Planning Grid

	Activities		
Context/Focus	**Shadowing / Critical Reflection**	**Practice/ Critical Reflection**	**Advocacy/ Critical Reflection**
Context: district Focus: teacher development	spend two days with the district Director of Professional Development		
Context: school Focus: disaggregation of achievement data		work with school principals to develop a system for disaggregating data and planning instructional interventions to address student performance at the school level	
Context: non-school social services Focus: after-school programs for children			work with after-care providers at the YMCA to plan activities that develop children's social skills
Context: state Focus: school reform	attend statewide meeting on new regulations for IDEA with district Director of Exceptional Children Programs		
Context: district Focus: accountability		work with three other doctoral students and a faculty advisor to develop models for dissemination of information about student progress to communities	
Context: school/district Focus: student discipline			work with high school principals to involve social services, mental health, recreation, and law enforcement agencies in interventions with students who exhibit behavior problems
Context: community Focus: family, teachers, students			

another, to respecting diverse points-of-view, to valuing the unique backgrounds and experiences each person brings to the conversation, and to modeling the values and beliefs we espouse for students.

Democracy is hard work. These conversations are difficult but incredibly rewarding. The struggle to articulate the principles on which one school leadership preparation is based continues. Translating those beliefs into practice may be the harder work. The struggle continues.

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