

## Prospective Experimental Program Concept Paper February 2012

### Overview of this Report

The Commission adopted revised Experimental Program Standards at its March 2008 meeting, <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2008-03/2008-03-3A.pdf>. At the May 2008 COA meeting, staff presented information on the technical assistance meetings that were held focusing on Experimental Programs and procedures for programs to follow in proposing new Experimental Programs, <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2008-05/2008-05-item-17.pdf>. The procedures were detailed, including a possible timeline for the submission and approval process. This agenda item presents one concept for an experimental programs being considered by a currently accredited institution and is presented for the COA's discussion.

### Staff Recommendation

This is an information item only.

### Background

The purpose of experimental programs is described in the Experimental Programs Handbook:

The experimental program option is designed to encourage innovations in educator preparation and investigation of those innovations, with the aim of increasing the profession's understanding of professional learning and improving professional practice for the benefit of all students in California. Experimental programs were provided for in Education Code 44273(a) as a way for programs of "merit and the potential of improving the quality of service authorized by the credential" to be developed. In the past, few programs have been submitted under this option. The revised Experimental Program standards take into account this under-utilization and are designed to encourage innovation with accountability to the profession. (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/Experimental-Program.doc>)

The procedures the COA adopted to review and approve experimental programs are contained in the *Experimental Programs Handbook* <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/Experimental-Program.pdf>. In the Spring of 2009, three institutions' concepts were presented to the COA. Two of those concepts were successfully expanded into proposals that were approved by the COA in May 2010. Attached to this agenda is the concept paper from National University that describes a preliminary administrative services Program the institution proposes to develop as an experimental program.

After the COA's discussion of the experimental program concept, staff will utilize the committee's feedback to guide staff at the institution as they continue to develop their proposal. The full proposals will be reviewed by peer reviewers and when the reviewers find the proposal meets the Experimental Program standards, the prospective experimental program will be brought back to the COA for approval.

**Proposal for Experimental Program  
National University  
School of Education  
Educational Administration and School Counseling/Psychology Department**

***Master of Science in Innovative School Leadership*  
A Collaborative Between the Schools of Education and  
Business Management at National University  
DRAFT**

**Proposal Concepts and Rationale**

**Description:** The Innovative School Leadership (ISL) program is designed for students who are committed to change in schools and school systems, and who are interested in becoming education leaders who can and will act as change agents. The program combines courses from the School of Education and the School of Business Management providing the student with differing viewpoints about leadership and organizational development all within a context of changing education and societal environments; particularly increased cultural diversity. The eleven courses have embedded field-based activities providing a bridge between theory and practice.

**Rationale:** School administrators are increasingly not prepared to lead their organizations through necessary change precipitated by the turbulent environments in which schools exist (e.g., increased accountability, global economy, diversity). An interdisciplinary approach to school leader preparation will allow its graduates to better understand the ever-changing environments and be prepared to lead whole-school and whole-district change to meet the needs of their constituents (students, parents, community, and industry).

The developers have positioned the program to one of a select few “innovative sites” for the Alliance to Reform Educational Leadership (AREL) in the G.W. Bush Institute in Dallas. As the AREL states, the program aims to provide “An integrated approach to building the right competencies for executive-level leadership, based on high standards, rigorous coursework, innovative curricula, and carefully crafted mentorships” (2010, p. 1). Using the AREL foci as guides in the development of this program, the developers embrace their concerns with the preparation of school leaders. The AREL describes this need as thus:

Despite numerous large and small leaps forward in the past decades, the American public school system remains severely broken. Numerous children continue to fall behind or drop out. Among those who do graduate, many are unable to compete successfully in secondary education programs or employment markets. The overall cost to communities and society is high, particularly in the face of global competition. The Bush Institute believes that a root cause of our nation’s public education crisis is a lack of effective school leadership. Principals and superintendants are unable to truly lead their students to higher levels of achievement. The shortcomings of today’s system include:

- Distorted incentives that dissuade top talent from pursuing school leadership positions
- Conventional principal training programs that lack attention to developing crucial leadership and management competencies

- Insufficient operational authority for today’s principals to use talents and energy to change schools and solve problems.

In short, the pipeline of qualified leadership candidates is shallow, their training is inadequate, and the context in which they are placed to lead is an impediment to decision-making. The system itself undermines leaders and prohibits their success (2010, p. 2).

Levine (2005) surveyed 1800 principals (41% response rate) seeking their opinions regarding the quality and relevance of their educational administration degree curriculum (see Appendix A). His findings suggest that many of the courses in a traditional educational administration program of study were deemed unimportant to the job principal. With this in mind, the ISL has developed a new curriculum that offers the courses principals felt were most important (law, instructional leadership/curriculum development, community relations, conflict resolution, organizational behavior), but also included courses that the School of Business Management deemed important despite low ratings by the principals surveyed (financial reporting, negotiations) determining that the schools of education may not have had the capacity to offer these courses in the correct format or by appropriate scholars.

Levine (2005) determined 25 schools of education offered high quality principal preparation programs based on the following criteria where the school leadership must:

1. be purposeful, inclusive, and values driven;
2. embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school;
3. promote an active view of learning;
4. be instructionally focused;
5. reach throughout the school community;
6. build capacity by developing the school as a learning community;
7. be futures-oriented and strategically driven;
8. draw on experiential and innovative methodologies;
9. benefit from a support and policy context that is coherent, systematic, and implementation driven; and
10. receive support from a national college that leads the discourse on leadership for Learning (p. 54).

These criteria are included in the Program and Course Learning Outcomes of the ISL.

By offering a curriculum that includes both “cutting edge” management and educational leadership theory and strategies for “best practice” the candidates will be better prepared for the schools of both today and tomorrow. The emphasis on creating change agents will ensure that the schools will be able to make necessary changes to be relevant to the changing economy and society.

## References

- AREL (Alliance to Reform Educational Leadership) (2010). AREL: enhancing education leadership for our children and our nation. Dallas: George W. Bush Institute.
- Levine, A.E. (2005). *Educating school leaders*. The Education Schools Project, Columbia University Teachers College.