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A REVIEW OF ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION AS A FIELD OF STUDY: IN QUEST OF DOCTORAL DEGREE GUIDELINES – COMMEMORATING 120 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

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ABSTRACT

The book, *Advancing Higher Education as a Field of Study: In Quest of Doctoral Degree Guidelines – Commemorating 120 Years of Excellence* by Sydney Freeman, Jr., Linda Serra Hagedorn, Lester F. Goodchild, and Dianne A. Wright (Editors), Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2014, 340 pages, \$49.95 (softcover) is reviewed and recommended for faculty and administrators who have a graduate program in higher education at their respective institution or may need information on how a program can be created using standardized curriculum guidelines.

REVIEW

Lisa Wolf-Wendel writes in the Foreword,

“Who among us hasn’t struggled with trying to tell people what it is that we do? I sometimes tell people, ‘I study colleges and universities.’ Or I tell them that ‘I educate people who want to be university administrators.’ Still I get a lot of puzzled looks from people who don’t know that our field of study even exists” (p. xiii).

If this is how you have responded to persons outside of higher education about our profession then *Advancing Higher Education as a Field of Study* provides a concrete, concise, and cogent framework about the history, standards, structure, and future of master’s and doctoral programs. The editors and authors dissected and delved into the formation of higher education as an academic domain and in 12 detailed chapters covered information on professional competencies, the governing body that was instrumental in creating the standards, core concepts in graduate programs, and a case study that applied the theory with practice as well as standards.

The strength of the book can be attributed to the germinal scholars who are the editors, each of whom have spent a considerable amount of time in higher education as faculty and administrators. Moreover, they have are the leaders in the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) as

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well as The Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs (CAHEP) that created the policies and guidelines for the majority of academic programs across the country.

Part One, History and the Contemporary Condition of Higher Education as a Field of Study, provides the reader with an historical and contemporary overview of the field of higher education. The late Lester G. Goodchild moves the reader, in Chapter 1, through a timeline that includes the formation of early higher education programs and the curriculum that was taught, the creation of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and the development of concrete standards for the profession. Chapter 2 continues describing the contemporary journey of higher education degree programs from 1974-2012, through the analysis of surveys that provide a snapshot of the coursework required, degrees conferred, mission statements, admissions criteria, student demographic profile, governance patterns, and faculty employed. The trend study was illuminating, and it could be simply stated that the more things change, the more things remain the same. In other words, the authors, Hyle and Goodchild, proffered that there were small shifts in each of the aforementioned areas with the greatest change in the diversification of the curriculum.

Part Two, Existing Higher Education Program Guidelines Consideration, opens with DiRamio's chapter 3 providing a backdrop and delineating the standards and guidelines created by several pivotal governing bodies, specifically the American College Student Personnel Association (ACPA), the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The author connects the historical journey of higher education and the challenges faced by pivotal administrative leaders that gave rise to "standards of practice the student affairs profession later embraced" (p. 77). Specifically, campus challenges and demographic shifts led to the creation of positions such as the Dean of Women and subsequently organizations to support the growing number of specialized professionals in the field of higher education. These organizations also created guidelines and standards, such as *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs*, that are used as a framework to provide a healthy academic and learning environment for students.

Dean and Jones note in Chapter 4 that student affairs programs across the country utilize the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of their curriculum and overall program effectiveness. The authors share the details of the laborious process involved over the 40 year history in which scholars wrote the standards that encompasses the varied perspectives and values of the profession. The dedicated leaders in the field are named in this chapter along with a description of the painstaking work they accomplished to conceptualize the guidelines for the profession. The outcome was "A Commitment to Quality: Guidelines for Higher Education Administration and Leadership Preparation Programs at the Master's Degree Level (2010)" (p. 124) and the purpose, program domain, content domain, as well as outcome domain are enumerated which is useful for program coordinators seeking an assessment tool.

Crystal Chambers provides a relevant case study in chapter 6 that provides a theoretical connection to the bases of power (French & Raven, 1959) and the department dynamics between the higher education and k-12 leadership programs. The Case of East Carolina University mirrors the challenges faced by most higher education programs that are housed within an educational leadership department that is primarily focused on the development of elementary and secondary leaders. As Wolf-Wendel indicated, "no one is going to think of higher education as the 'front porch' of the school of education as it does for our k-12 colleagues and their field" (p. xvi). This statement was evident by the disparity in the power structure of the department with the k-12 faculty earning higher wages, positional authority as a leader in the department, as well as control of the admissions process. The use of the CAHEP Guidelines helped the higher education faculty gain some academic freedom within the department. This chapter was extremely helpful because it gives the reader an opportunity to understand the importance of how the standards in the field give the program legitimacy, and the faculty are then given the opportunity to name their own destiny rather than have others, who do not understand the particular nuances of our field, move us to the back porch.

Part Three, *Implications for Higher Education Administration Degree Programs' Possible Movement Toward Doctoral Degree Guidelines*, gives the reader perspectives on how doctoral programs prepare university leaders, the growing trend of community college doctoral leadership programs, the impact of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, and the future of the field. To understand or anticipate what the future trends are it is best to ask the presidents who have the fiduciary responsibility to move their institutions toward a strategically impactful goal.

Freeman and Kochan, authors of Chapter 7, surveyed 13 university presidents to assess what are the key components necessary in a doctoral program to prepare students for university leadership. The authors' study netted three theoretical propositions: (1) theory and practice (2) consistency and flexibility and (3) assessment and accountability of student learning. Provided in the chapter is a succinct chart that connects the three propositions with a connection with what should be the goals of the curriculum, goals for the faculty, and goals for the students as noted from the perspectives of the presidents, literature, and the chapter authors.

When we think about program and curricular trends, the development of the community college leadership programs cannot be overlooked. Hagedorn and Purnamasari, Chapter 8, share why this type of curricular program is a necessity in an era where the campus landscape is shifting rapidly and a large number of students are opting for a swifter entry and exit in higher education so they can go to work. The authors examine the leadership programs that have a primary focus on preparing community college leaders and they found that: (1) change happens when leadership changes (2) change happens with demographic shifts (3) change happens because of external competitors and (4) change happens when financial conditions change. These findings necessitate the faculty in the community college doctoral programs remain vigilant about the evolution of the higher education landscape and the curriculum keeps pace with the changes and challenges professionals encounter. The final question posed by the authors was "should there be a set of standards for community college leadership programs?" It seems as though there should be in order to critique and assess the rigor of the curriculum so that the doctoral students can be well prepared to lead an institution that is sure to experience unique challenges because of its changing demographic.

Education is a unique discipline because there are two primary types of doctoral degrees offered upon completion of the dissertation, and they are the doctor of education or Ed.D. and the doctor of philosophy or Ph.D. Chapter 9, written by Hart and Ludwig, presents the debate on the breadth, depth, and academic rigor assigned to the differing doctoral degrees. The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) was created to study the history, concepts, and curricular differentiation between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. Additionally, the goal was "to increase recognition and bolster program efficacy for the Ed.D. and Ph.D. through clarification of degree objectives and agreement on curriculum (p. 208). Overall, there is a need to create guidelines for the degrees offered in Education and there is quite a bit of curricular overlap between the two degrees but very few standards created to differentiate them.

The final three chapters in the book give the reader numerous practical perspectives and guidelines for curricular design, collaboration, guidelines, and implementation. Colbeck and Southworth provide numerous curricular examples of programs that collaborate across disciplines and are interdisciplinary so that students have a varied academic experience. This format encourages "faculty from different fields to design courses that allow their differing specializations to provide alternative perspectives on pertinent, real-world issues" (p. 216). There is also another model in which programs have a specific and prescribed curriculum for their doctoral students. Overall, the authors "encourage all administrators and faculty to consider the interaction of conceptual building blocks of higher education for doctoral study: theory, specialization, application and synthesis, research methods, prior experience, and core course work" (p. 225). Hendrickson concurs, in Chapter 11, with the building blocks premise stating that "these core knowledge domains are history; structure, function, and environment; organizational theory; curriculum; and students" (p. 238). Connecting the curricular concepts and guidelines together, Wright and Freeman synthesize the importance of providing future

administrators with a core set of courses that will prepare them for a sound leadership experience. Furthermore, the coursework must be anchored with standards and guidelines that can be evaluated and assessed for academic quality and rigor.

Overall, *Advancing Higher Education as a Field of Study* can be used in several ways by faculty and administrators. First, it can be used as a supplemental text in a higher education history or organizational theory course. Second, program and department chairs can use the book as a resource when writing assessment reports on their student affairs and/or higher education master's and doctoral programs. Third, the numerous web sites and curricular examples, notably those of the top 10 programs in the country, are useful for curricular redesign and development. The editors wrote a book that has given higher education faculty and doctoral program administrators a powerful tool to conceptualize what their current practices are and how they can be modified and strengthened.

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BIOGRAPHY



Dr. Mary F. Howard-Hamilton is a Distinguished Research Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership in the Bayh College of Education at Indiana State University. She was a recipient of the Contribution to Knowledge Award from the American College Personnel Association in 2017, the Indiana State University Presidential Medal for Exemplary Teaching and Scholarship and the Theodore Dreiser Distinguished Research and Creativity Award in 2015. She also received the Bayh College of Education, Holmstedt Distinguished Professorship Award for 2012-2013. Dr. Howard-Hamilton received her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from The University of Iowa and a Doctorate of Education, Ed.D., from North Carolina State University

As a researcher, Dr. Howard-Hamilton has published over 90 articles and book chapters. The most recent co-authored books are, "Diverse Millennial Students in College", "Multiculturalism on Campus: Theories, Models, and Practices for Understanding Diversity and Creating Inclusion", "Unleashing Suppressed Voices on College Campuses: Diversity Issues in Higher Education" and "Standing on the Outside Looking In: Underrepresented Students' Experiences in Advanced Degree Programs". Dr. Howard-Hamilton served on the Executive Board for the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) as the Member-at-Large from 2014-2016.



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