Dear EDLE Alumni, Students, Faculty, and Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of what we hope will become a quarterly newsletter of the Education Leadership Program. As our program has grown over the years, we have expanded the services and opportunities we provide to the larger educational community that ranges from northern and central Virginia to the nation and beyond. We want to keep you up to date about what our faculty, students, and community partners are doing to improve the quality of education leadership and K-12 education in the region.

On behalf of the EDLE faculty and staff, I hope you will enjoy the newsletters that come your way and that you will stay in touch.

Sincerely,

S. David Brazer, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator

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**General News**

The 11th Annual Education Leadership Conference, *Courageous Leadership: Innovation for School Improvement*, was held on March 16, 2010. Our special guest, President Alan Merten, opened the Conference with a message to all of our students and guests about courageous leadership in action. Forty principals, nominated by our students and faculty, were invited to tell their stories of courageous innovative leadership. Principals shared their stories with enthusiasm to three tables of eight students. In addition to dinner and dessert, the group was treated to a summary of lessons learned from the stories and a panel discussion.
EDLE 616 Curriculum Development and Evaluation

A Self-Portrait in Ideas

Alan Sturrock

There’s an old Chinese tale about the centipede who was happy, quite, until a toad, in fun said, “Pray which leg goes after which?” This worked his mind to such a pitch; he lay distracted in a ditch considering how to run.

Teaching and learning with students in EDLE 616 is somewhat akin to this. The interesting point is usually when certain students (or on rare occasions, the group) recognize that in fact they are studying themselves (it usually happens in the “tested, written, taught, and hidden” curriculum block). That often elicits an initial discomfort and then the instructor can never predict what happens next.

The lesson plan[s] is[are] scrutinized and often subject to vast improvement; small groups “take over” the class; small groups do more and more of the teaching; usually the class rendering of the “taught curriculum” (what we do every day) is nothing short of spectacular! The notions of alignment and evaluation suddenly take on a new meaning; previously that was always something that someone else did. And Ayers’ six questions (“liberating the curriculum”) can become a group “keening” for what, under NCLB, has been lost... or misplaced...or forgotten.

My favorite part is when, at the right moment, I quietly join the class and the lines are blurred between teacher and learner. As Yeats attests (Among Schoolchildren)

‘O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?’

On the drive home, I consider lessons learned about teaching and learning: distributed teaching (and leadership); leading and following; assisting in the art of discovery; getting out of the way of real learning. And the realization that the ditch is not such a bad place after all.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Northern Virginia School Leadership Center (NVSLC) was established in 2007 as a partnership among Loudoun County Public Schools, Prince William County Schools, Fairfax County Public Schools, Alexandria City Public Schools, and Arlington Public Schools. The vision: “The Northern Virginia School Leadership Center is a community of learners dedicated to nurturing collaborative leadership focused on instruction, engaging in reflective practice, and fostering continuous improvement in teaching and learning by bridging research and practice to inform courageous, ethical action”.

Thus far, NVSLC hosted the Annual Conference of the International Network of Principal Centers in April, 2008, and convened three conversations in which area school administrators shared ideas for improving the quality of students’ educational experiences. Three more conversations are in the planning stages for Summer 2010.

One of the Center’s functions is to help connect research to practice. As part of this effort, EDLE doctoral students have produced seven research briefs in response to questions posed by principals on topics important to their schools’ success. These can be found at http://www.taskstream.com/ts/brazer/NVSLCResearchBriefs.html.

We look forward to adding a major professional development component when we obtain funding. NVSLC activities are carried on at no cost to school divisions or participating individuals.
ALUMNI PROFILE

Mary Tam

I am currently an assistant principal with Fairfax County Public School (FCPS). My path toward administration began when I interviewed for and was accepted into Lead Fairfax’s Accelerated Certification Cohort (ACC) during the 2006-2007 school year. As a teacher leader accepted into ACC, I went through a one year, intensive academic program. At the end of that year, I graduated with a Postgraduate Professional License in Administration and Supervision, PreK-12.

When I went through ACC, Lead Fairfax partnered with instructors from George Mason’s Educational Leadership (EDLE) program. This partnership between Mason and FCPS enabled my cohort to gain important perspectives from all areas of leadership. Due to this wonderful experience and the vigorous curriculum, I was able to attain an assistant principal position within two weeks of graduation.

As a school leader and educator, I am always interested in bridging the student achievement gap, learning the latest “best practices,” and building teacher leadership and capacity.

With some administrative experience under my belt, I was offered the opportunity to be an adjunct instructor for the EDLE program and taught EDLE 616 Curriculum Development and Evaluation. I enjoyed the process of teaching and learning from my students. This fantastic experience led me to apply for the doctoral program in Mason’s College of Education and Human Development. I discovered that I want to be able to teach at the university level. The practice of studying and being part of educational research is very appealing to me. This past fall, I began my journey in the doctoral program. I am enjoying all of my classes as well as meeting and networking with my peers.

SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE ASSESSMENT

The EDLE faculty, led by Courtney Fletcher and Jim Upperman, have conducted preparation sessions for the past three years for Mason students who are registered for the state required School Leadership Licensure Assessment (SLLA). The four hour test, which is based on the 2008 ISLLC Standards, measures whether entry level school leaders are ready for professional practice.

More than fifty EDLE students participated in the January 2010 prep session, in which students were provided information about the makeup and format of the revised assessment. Sample questions were reviewed in each of the two SLLA question formats—multiple choice and constructed response (essay). Session facilitators also shared test taking strategies which were designed to empower EDLE students to be able to describe what they have learned from their coursework, internship experiences, and professional practice.

Mason EDLE students who will participate in the June 12, 2010 test administration are encouraged to enroll in the next EDLE-sponsored preparation session, which is scheduled for Friday May 21, 2010 at 4:30 PM at the GMU Fairfax Campus. For additional information, contact Associate Professor Dr. Jim Upperman at 703-993-2033 or the EDLE Program office at 703-993-3633.

For more information on the SLLA test dates or to register for the next test go to http://www.ets.org/sls.

EDLE Vision

The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

WHAT LEADERS OUGHT TO KNOW

Scott C. Bauer

The April, 2010 edition of Phi Delta Kappan includes an article by Anthony S. Bryk, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, entitled “Organizing Schools for Improvement.” Based on his fifteen years of involvement with the Consortium on Chicago School Research, Bryk outlines a model that describes “the complex interplay of how schools are organized and interact with the local school community to alter dramatically the odds for improving student achievement” (p. 24). Among the most important elements of the model: leadership drives change. This is an extremely timely article that deserves your attention!

Cohort News

New EDLE M.Ed. Cohorts:

**Fall 2010**
- Prince William
- Culpeper
- Frederick

**Spring 2011**
- Northern Virginia
- Loudoun
- Stafford

If you know of aspiring school leaders who might like to join one of these cohorts, please have them contact:

Dr. Farnoosh Shahrokhi
Outreach Coordinator
Phone: 703-993-2009
fshahrok@gmu.edu
http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/edleadership/

Recruitment for a doctoral cohort will begin in Fall 2010, anticipating application to the doctoral program by February 1, 2011. Anyone with a master’s degree interested in pursuing upper echelon school district leadership and/or research should consider the College of Education and Human Development’s doctoral program with a specialization in Education Leadership.

For more information, contact:

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