MINUTES
POLICY COUNCIL
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
**November 20, 2013**

1:00-3:00 p.m.
IUB – Room 2140
IUPUI – Room 3138E

**What follows is a summary of speaker contributions**

**Members Present:** D. Cross, J. Cummings, J. Damico, B. Edmonds, C. Guarino, R. Helfenbein, C. Hill Morton,  K. King Thorius, E. **Alternate Members Present:** K. Wohlwend, **Student Members Present:** O. Hopf, L. G. Lebeau, E. Mickey   **Staff Member Present:** T. Niggle **Dean's Staff Present:** J. Alexander, G. Gonzalez,  R. Kunzman, **Visitors Present:** J. Scheurich


R. Helfenbein introduced himself as the new chair, welcomed those in attendance and announced a small change in the order of the meeting to respect speaker time commitments.

I.      **Approval of  Minutes from April 24, 2013 Meeting (13.60M)**

K. King Thorius moved to approve the minutes as presented, and B. Edmonds seconded. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

**Approval of Minutes from April 24, 2013 Organizational Meeting (14.04)**

B. Edmonds moved to approve the minutes as presented, and K. King Thorius seconded. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

II.      **Dean's Report**

G. Gonzalez noted that during the recent legislative organization day, leaders of both houses were discussing early childhood as being a priority. The discussion of early childhood is not new, yet it currently lacks legislative support and funding. Comments from leaders in the House and Senate are giving the impression now however, that they are serious about passing some sort of early childhood program. One possibility may be a voucher program. No bill has been introduced yet, but it is something that would have a clear impact on the SOE and needs to be followed.

A second item to note is a sense that there is a need to do something about what has been described as the chaotic relationship between superintendent Ritz and the Governor's office. Much of the tension is taking place around the creation of the new Center for Career Readiness and Workforce Development. This is an agency that the governor created through executive

order that is supposed to staff the state board of education. However, the state board of education is chaired by the superintendent of public instruction. This is causing tension and conflict, some of which has been very public. In recent questioning, Ritz was very firm in that she will not accept anything that undermines her authority as the elected superintendent. This is central to the the conflict. Claims have been made that the new agency is really designed to be a shadow dept. of education that would act on behalf of the governor, and possibly around the department of education. There may be legislation in the works to try to deal with this conflict. There are a wide range of possibilities as to what that may look like and while nothing is being said publicly, it could include curtailing the powers of the superintendent or even making that an appointed position. That will have implications for the SOE because the department of education is currently the agency that regulates teacher licensure and all things that touch on our mission, whatever changes take place at the legislative level will ultimately impact us. Keeping up on happenings surrounding this issue, as well as that of early childhood will be important. Faculty may be called on to express their opinions of expertise.

G. Gonzalez also highlighted information on the marketing campaign in Bloomington for the SOE that was presented and discussed at the fall faculty meeting. The campaign is the result of a collaboration of efforts headed by RHB, which conducted many student focus groups to determine the strengths of the SOE and what the messaging for the school needs to be. The campaign is designed to highlight the SOE and to recruit more high quality students to the program. Part of the campaign involves ads at IU sporting events and more are underway for the basketball games. Gonzalez asked student representative O. Hopf to share her opinions on the campaign ads she has seen so far. Hopf commented that she likes the ads and feels the new slogan of "For Those Who Dare to Teach" has been received well by students.

The RHB agency made it clear that messages are grounded in student experiences of the strengths of the SOE. Future generations of students also then need to have those positive experiences. Part of the research was identifying possible areas where students have concerns in order to remedy them. One area of student concern discovered was the potential for overlap of courses. Some students were reporting that they were getting repetitive material; courses that were intended to be pre-requisites were overlapping and covering much of the same content. G. Gonzalez met with the dean's advisory council to discuss this concern.  As a result, Gonzalez intends to work with Mary Beth and faculty to bring the message to faculty to encourage them to review courses and if overlap appears to be occurring to take steps to remedy it.

K. Wohlwend commented that sequence of courses was examined last year and that some courses were realigned due to such overlaps. However, as the new sequences are implemented students who had taken earlier versions may see some of that overlap but moving forward that should decrease. Clear definitions of what each courses should cover are now in place to try to ensure students are not repeating material. Gonzalez replied that he was very glad to hear the issue was being addressed and the steps taken are excellent.

The second area of student concern that the RHB reported was variations in quality and expectations of on-line courses. Students reported that some on-line courses have few expectations and little feedback or interaction with professors while other on-line courses are much more rigorous and offer a greater extent of interaction with and feedback from professors. O. Hopf added that she has had two on-line courses and in both the professors took care in making sure to engage with students and encouraged meetings and interaction in-person as well as on-line. She felt that unfortunately, this has not been the experience of all students taking on-line courses though and that the issue of differences in on-line course quality needs to be addressed.

G. Gonzalez offered an example of a conversation he had with a student who spoke candidly with him about doing very little work in an on-line class and receiving no feedback, yet still receiving an A in the course. He reiterated that if discrepancies like these are happening they need to be corrected. Moving forward with the launching of the marketing campaign promises are being made and if the promises of high quality are not being upheld, the campaign will not be successful. Time needs to be spent to make sure quality of on-line programming is even. Faculty has done an excellent job with building on-line programs, certificates, and courses but consistency in quality remains to be very important.

Another issue that surfaced was the coordination of block programs. Some block programs are excellently coordinated in terms of field experience and courses that align with those experiences, while others are reported to lack that high level of coordination. Math and science programs in particular were mentioned as areas that lack some coordination and integration of what happens in field experiences versus course content.

Finally, the issue of classroom management was pointed out as well. Students feel they need more experiences with classroom management skills. Some students are getting this through field experiences and method courses but others feel they need more or that they are not getting enough training in this area. As we continue to highlight the uniqueness of our program to recruit high ability students we need to be mindful of the promises we are making them and be aware of issues that may be potential week links to our programming.

G. Gonzalez stated that he offers these issues raised by students not as criticisms but as areas and issues to be cognizant and mindful of and for faculty to be able to take this information to share with their colleagues in their programs and department levels. Overall things are off to a good start.

## III.     Diversity Topic

J. Scheurich, Program Coordinator for the Urban Education Studies Ph.D. program at IUPUI presented the diversity topic. He discussed the Urban Education Studies program and presented some information about what types of projects students in Indianapolis are taking part in.

The Urban Education Studies doctorate program is in its second year. The focus of the program is on urban education and its surrounding environment, including suburban districts that surround urban areas. Students in the program have thus far been a majority of students of color. The degree is rather open and people coming into the program have a variety of backgrounds.

There is a heavy focus on the inequity within urban schools. There is a popular discourse, even among educators about the nature of the urban environment that is distorted. The focus is on the dangers, failures and problems of the urban environment, even though within the urban environment there are multiple positive aspects. Even within education research there are ideas about what urban is that are not very accurate that play into general stereotypes and prejudices, particularly around race and class. The urban studies program focuses on a lot of those issues.

For example, one issue is a focus on achievement gap and how it is so often viewed as between Blacks and Whites or between Whites and Latino's, yet, there is a significant achievement gap between some Asian groups and Whites that is never discussed, even though it is fairly sizable and persistent. This highlights the discourse of how certain things are paid attention to while others are not. We would argue that there is not an achievement gap but rather there is an opportunity to learn gap. There are significant racial disparities in special education, discipline, placement into honors classes and low track classes, where novice teachers are placed, teachers teaching outside their expertise, resources and many more. There are problems with cultural misunderstandings between teachers and students. The majority of teachers in urban areas live outside of the school districts and communities in which they work, and have a huge disconnect between themselves and the lives, communities and lived experiences of their students. Looking at these disparities systemically, rather than in single areas it can be seen that there is a whole system in the urban environment that is not about an achievement gap but rather about a gap in the opportunity to learn.

In addition, the schools themselves are not the only area of focus. The environment and community surrounding the school also plays a significant role in disparities. There are racial and ethnic disparities in medicine, law enforcement, and housing, among others. Past formal and informal laws still play out in urban areas to the disadvantage of people of color. Multiple systemic disparities in the urban environment combine with the multiple systemic disparities in schools that is producing the so called achievement gap. These systemic disparities however, are not the common discourse we hear. The popular discourse we hear is more about something being wrong with urban kids, their parents, their neighborhoods or racial cultures. That these communities even continue to survive given the huge disparities they face is amazing.

A lot of white people are uncomfortable with these issues and may even want to deny these issues exist. There are few conversations about this, even in colleges of education, and when they do occur, they are very light. They don't address the issues of white cultural predominant norms that we live within. The privileges that whites receive beyond their conscience attention and negative subtractions that people of color receive beyond their conscience attentions are areas that need to be addressed because this is the context of the environment. The urban education studies program is addressing and focusing on these types of issues.

J. Scheurich was then asked to talk a little bit about some of the projects students in the program are involved in. He responded that students are using block grant funds for students to connect

with a particular faculty member to do research connected to that faculty member's research. Examples include students who are working with faculty in research on race and sports, counseling, and in conjunction with an area high school. Additionally, some students are involved in research at the Great Lakes Equity Center and STEM center. Many students enter the program coming from a professional background rather than with a research background so we also provide some funding for them to have the opportunity to attend conferences to get exposure to more research.

G. Gonzalez remarked that it was great to see so many Urban Education Studies Ph.D. students presenting and actively engaged at the recent UCA conference. He then commented that despite the intentions of policy like NCLB, annual testing, and other attempts to close the achievement gap or opportunity to learn gap, it is still pervasive. Gonzalez asked Scheurich that in preparing future researchers and educators, is there anything he has found that does appear promising that we can advocate for as a means to eliminate the gap in achievement?

J. Scheurich replied that he has seen examples of urban schools and districts all over the country that are successful with the majority of students. He believes that 80 to 85% of what it takes to have a reasonably successful school for all students is known. Within education leadership there are about seven to ten years of good research on the nature of schools that are unusually successful. The issue is more of getting schools and districts to follow programs of highly successful school districts. There are structural limitations though. When we compare the U.S. to other countries that are high performers, for example Denmark, one major difference is how teachers spend about a third of their time on improving practice and two-thirds teaching. In the U.S barely 5% of the day is spent improving practice. If results are to be improved then teaching needs to be approved, which is a structural barrier. Teaching programs in general are not preparing future teachers to teach in urban setting. Ongoing training and professional development is also lacking after teachers enter into the field. Pay and societal respect for teachers is also a barrier and an issue.

G. Gonzalez brought up the issue of advocacy and the need to go beyond being great researchers, teachers or leaders to advocates for what works in education. He also brought up how training in effective advocacy is often lacking in some regards, leaving students feeling insufficient in their knowledge or experience of advocacy skills. He asked J. Scheurich if that would be something he would like to integrate into the urban education program. Scheurich responded that the program actually integrates an advocacy component but could also do more. Many students of the program so far were actually active advocates before entering the program. Additionally, a major portion of the urban studies program focuses on active engagement in the community.

R. Helfenbein concluded by reminding committee members to continue to bring forward future diversity topics and speakers, and look to fellow colleagues for future topics as well.

## IV.    New Business

**a)Teacher Education Program (TEP) Policy (14.09)**

R. Kunzman presented an information item regarding a change in policy for the teacher education program. Changes in program requirements were causing students who were entering under one program to have to make changes part-way through their program in order to meet newer programming requirements. To be allowed to continue to follow the requirements of the program in which students entered, they had to undergo a formal appeals process. In order to be more efficient, the policy has been adjusted so that students will be held to the requirements of the program they enter into, unless they choose to follow subsequent program requirements. This change has gone through the elementary and secondary education councils and was presented to keep the policy council as an information item.

**b) Education Studies Minor – Licensure Track (14.08)**

R. Kunzman presented information on a proposal for a new education studies minor option of a pre-licensure track. The proposed minor would be intended for students who are not education majors but would like to complete a good portion of the pre-requisites for licensure during their undergraduate years with the possibility of finishing licensure after graduation. Courses have been identified in both elementary and secondary education that could be taken to fulfill the college's requirement for 9 credits of 300 level or above coursework for a minor, while also giving students a good start on fulfilling some requirements of licensure.

R. Helfenbein asked if there had been any discussion of offering this minor at IUPUI. Kunzman replied that it had not yet been discussed.

This proposal came as a motion from the Committee on Teacher Education.  *Outcome*: Passed unanimously.

**c) Transcript Policy (14.10)**

J. Alexander presented information on a proposal for a change in transcript policy for graduate students. Transcripts from college credits earned as part of duel enrollment in high school or a class taken at a different place during the beginning of the undergraduate degree, or credits earned in undergrad as part of a study abroad program can take a long time for students to find and get appropriately submitted. The proposal then is that transcripts from duel high school courses, study abroad courses or any non-degree granting programs will not be required. This will make the application process easier and less expensive for graduate students and will allow the SOE to receive more completed graduate applications.

R. Helfenbein remarked that the proposal also mentions that fellowships are free to pursue those types of additional transcripts though.

A brief discussion of the proposal ensued. J. Damico asked why certain fellowships or scholarships would need more transcripts. R. Helfenbein replied that he thought it was so as to

not interfere with another program that had its own system of requirements. B. Edmonds responded that it might also be so that the fellowship applicant's grades can all be viewed because usually courses that are transferred do not show the grade from the transferring institution, only that the course was counted toward fulfillment of requirements at the degree granting institution.

C. Guarino asked if the transcript policy would apply to someone who did their first two years at one institution and then transferred to another. She commented that she felt that situation would warrant having that transcript and grades available if it was for a considerable portion of their undergrad degree.

K. Wohlwend clarified the comment by saying the policy was a two-part policy. One part is that if another degree granting institution has approved and accepted previous coursework, then IU would trust the other institution that necessary criteria was met. Therefore, graduate students applying would not need to go back and provide a copy of that earlier transcript. The second part is then about the non-degree seeking transcripts.

R. Helfenbein asked J. Alexander if this would be a core campus policy or IUB specific. J. Alexander responded that since the proposal is coming from graduate studies it could be fair to assume it would be a core campus policy.

The proposal came as a motion from the Graduate Studies Office. *Outcome*: Passed unanimously.


## V.     New Courses/Course Changes


R. Helfenbein directed the Policy Council members' attention to the new courses/course changes. The courses are open for faculty remonstrance and will be approved unless remonstrance is received within 30 days.

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** The meeting adjourned at 2:25pm **