

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review
Graduate Programs in Catholic Educational Leadership
Department of Leadership Studies
School of Education
Summer 2006

Summary Prepared by Walter H. Gmelch, Dean

The School of Education invited two highly respected consultants from the field of Catholic Educational Leadership to act as reviewers for the graduate programs in Catholic Educational Leadership. Claire M. Helm, Ph.D., Vice President of Operations and Director, Office of Leadership Development, National Catholic Educational Association, and John James, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education, St. Louis University. Drs. Helm and James reviewed the Catholic Educational Leadership program during their campus visit from June 27 to June 30, 2006. Prior to their visit, reviewers were sent the Department's comprehensive self-study document. To further assist the team in their work, they were provided copies of various documents that included, in part, the sample program assessment questionnaires, registration statistics, the University of San Francisco's Mission Statement, the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the USF catalog. The team met with the dean, associate deans, full and part-time members of the faculty, staff, current students and alumni.

This Executive Summary addresses six basic questions regarding the quality of the Catholic Educational Leadership programs. The narrative below reflects the external reviewers' assessment of the Masters and Doctoral programs.

1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the Catholic Educational Leadership program? How do the programs compare with top-tier programs nationally?

The consultants determined from the data set forth by the documents and the campus visitation with faculty, students, and administrators that the ICEL/CEL programs are **excellent**, defined as "significantly above the level one would expect to find at a top-tier college or university". Specifically, the consultants stated that the CEL doctoral program at USF is perceived by many as the "gold standard" of Catholic Educational Leadership programs and "the envy" of other Catholic universities and colleges. In concurrence, 95% of the students rated the CEL program as "good" to "excellent". This is not to say that there is not room for improvement as the recommendations provided by the consultants represent areas needing attention to maintain and expand CEL's capacity for excellence. CEL is at a "crossroads" related to transitions in leadership, recruitment, personnel, resources, and its relationship to other programs. These issues will be addressed in the next section of the Executive Summary. Before moving to this item, a brief summarization of the External Reviewers' assessment of CEL curriculum, faculty, and students follows.

- A. Curriculum:** The Reviewers characterized the curriculum as strong based on solid content with priority on research, clear in focus on Catholic Educational Leadership, and continuity among the faculty. They argued that the organizing principle that sets CEL's program apart from other universities is its thirty year commitment to Catholic educational leadership whereby CEL "lives" its mission statement. The SUMMA rating of CEL courses places curricular related items at 95% to 100% level.
 - B. Faculty:** One hundred percent of the students viewed the overall quality of faculty as "good" to "excellent." Students in the focus group conducted by the Reviewers were effusive in their praise of faculty. Also the degree to which the full-time faculty integrates the adjuncts as full fledged faculty members was seen by the Reviewers as remarkable. The "permanent" adjunct faculty provide "tremendous internal cohesion, collegiality, and strong alignment in understanding the purpose and objectives of the CEL program."
 - C. Students:** The CEL program draws student from across the nation and internationally. From the External Reviewer's perspective, the volume and quality of the doctoral dissertations surpasses that of any other Catholic college or university in the United States.
- 2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?**
 - A. Transitions in Leadership:** Several leadership transitions in the past two years have impacted and influenced ICEL and CEL. First and foremost, Sr. Mary Peter Travis retired and stepped down after long and distinguished service as ICEL Director and Department Chair. Also, Br. Ray Vercruyse was hired to join the faculty and step into the roles of Chair and Director, and just this year also assumed the role of Chair of the newly formed department. During this time a new dean also joined the School of Education. This has been a time of change, transition, and exploration of opportunities for new programs and initiatives.
 - B. Student Recruitment:** As noted by the External Reviewers and the CEL faculty, enrollment remains an ongoing concern. New markets and recruiting efforts are needed in order for the CEL program to realize its full potential and place in the world of Catholic Educational Leadership.
 - C. Program Advancement:** The External Reviewers recommended that the CEL program, in conjunction with its constituencies and necessary partners, engage in the development of a strategic plan that will provide guidance and direction for the issues related to recruitment, strategic expansion of programs, and articulation with the Organizational and Leadership program.
 - D. Expansion and Diversification of Faculty:** Many of the adjuncts and full-time faculty earned their doctorates from USF and together they

provide a clear sense of collegiality. However, the strong cohesion and homogeneity of faculty represent a double edged sword. The External Reviewers recommended diversification of the core faculty if the program is going to continue to flourish.

- E. Resources:** As a common practice, University of San Francisco has reduced CEL student tuition by 47%, realizing that Catholic educators are not compensated at the same wage rate as public school educators. The Reviewers commented that this reduction in tuition, while generous, is a standard practice of many Jesuit universities across the country and is critical for reasons of supporting the mission.

3. What specific recommendations for improving the program's quality?

- A. Transitions in Leadership:** The Department Chair of the newly formed Department of Leadership Studies is to be commended for his skillful leadership of the new combined department (the Department of Leadership Studies). He commands the full support from, and respect of, the Deans' Office.
- B. Student Recruitment:** New marketing strategies and activities have commenced to augment the current enrollment and search for new markets internationally. In November, 2006, the Chair of the Department of Leadership Studies and the Dean of the School of Education will be attending the East Asia Conference for Overseas Schools (EARCOS) to explore new clientele from private schools serving the Pacific Rim. Both certificate and degree programs will be proposed to attract a new clientele for on campus programs as well as courses delivered on site in Asia.
- C. Program Advancement:** CEL faculty has working on expanding the CEL program to include masters and possibly doctoral degrees in higher education, and also increase the faculty to include a scholar with this expertise. This new faculty member would also be able to augment support for the other leadership programs in the newly formed Department of Leadership Studies.
- D. Expansion and Diversification of Faculty:** The program faculty are diligently working on diversifying its faculty ranks. The combination of both leadership departments (once two departments of 2 and 4 faculty) now represents 6 full-time faculty with greater depth and breadth of expertise. Another successful strategy has been to enhance the Summer West faculty with the addition of many "experts" in the field from across the United States including prominent and successful university presidents and visiting faculty. Finally, the new department will be able to hire an additional full time faculty member in educational leadership to begin Fall Semester 2007.
- E. Resources:** As the University of San Francisco engages in new pricing structures for tuition over the next few years, it should not lose sight of the fact that tuition reduction for Catholic educators is critical to support the mission the University serves and the clientele who serve the mission of Catholic education. The practice of tuition reduction has been a clear sign

of the University's commitment to a common good though the legacy of our CEL graduates.

4. Is the program following the University's strategic initiatives?

The Catholic Educational Leadership programs and faculty are fulfilling University of San Francisco's mission and strategic initiatives by recruiting, supporting, educating and graduating a diverse and enlightened student body. The graduates are advancing the legacy of USF's mission and values. The External Reviewers cited one student: "Catholicity transcends every class; it is about being a Catholic leader." They went on to say that every student and faculty member they met were eager to share their ICEL "story." The conclusion of their report stated: "It has been said that the person who goes on a journey is not the same person who returns; we must agree." Clearly CEL fulfills the University's strategic initiatives.

5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University a premier Jesuit Catholic urban university.

The External Reviews believed the international reputation of CEL and ICEL enables USF to not only realize its vision as a premier Catholic Jesuit university, but provides mechanism whereby the University might fashion a more humane and just world. They observed that this success did not happen by accident but represents visionary leadership dating back three decades and ongoing support and clarity on the part of the President, Provost, Trustees, the Jesuit Community, and the faculty and staff. As an aside, they commented that they do not make these statements lightly or without substantiation.

6. What is the timetable for implementation of recommendations?

As articulated in this document, we have already begun responding to the general issues raised in Section 2 with recommendations, strategies, and actions as outlined in Section 3. In addition, we will be engaging in a five-year strategic plan to help clarify the program's needs and establish priorities for resource allocation within the School of Education. There is no program more central to the mission and core values of the University and School than Catholic Educational Leadership. Clearly this is a program worthy of further investment.