

IUPUI GAC Reviewer Form

Documents Reviewed: Proposal for a Ph.D. in Urban Education

Summary of Proposal:

According to the proposal, "The Ph.D. degree program in Urban Education advances the study of schooling in complex urban environments and community-based research designed in partnership with schools and community organizations to solve urban educational problems and enable urban schools to change to meet 21st century demands. The program of studies is rooted in the assumption that innovative urban and public education involves studies of complex socio-cultural, economic, and political systems and collaborative research done in partnerships with families, communities, policymakers, and a variety of other partners and disciplines. The doctoral program will provide specialized training to develop scholars who understand the impact of poverty and cultural diversity in education and are skilled in multiple methodologies that nurture partnerships through collaborative inquiry."

The program objectives are listed below:

1. Offer an innovative doctoral program in Urban Education, an emergent field of study, that prepares scholars whose research will contribute to creative and effective support and innovation for urban education and community development activities.
2. Develop and sustain partnerships with community agencies (including schools, school districts, social service agencies, businesses, local government, and others) that will create ideas and opportunities for research and civic engagement activities.
3. Pursue study and research opportunities dedicated to assuring equity and social justice for all citizens, especially as they concern public P-20 education.
4. Forge partnerships with other units at IUPUI, as well as with IU, Purdue, and the CUE Deans (the Council on Urban Education), in order to enhance opportunities for interdisciplinary curriculum development and collaborative research agendas.

5. Take full advantage of our urban location through effective use of the wide range of other human capital (political, financial, and intellectual resources).
6. Make effective and innovative use of technology that will enhance the research, teaching, and civic engagement of faculty and students participating in the program.
7. Prepare researchers who can contribute to statewide and national efforts in the development of effective and proactive articulation of P-20 education, with an emphasis on longitudinal education leading to higher education and careers.

1. Are the goals clear and achievable?

The goals and objectives of this proposal are indeed clear and achievable. This doctoral program is unique and “first of a kind” in the state of Indiana and meets the defined needs of using a community approach (including schools, school districts, social service agencies, businesses, local government, and others) to improve urban education. Research in P-20 urban education is critical as urban schools move forward to meet the rigorous demands that the accountability movement has placed on them. Taking advantage of the assets found in urban areas and forging partnerships with internal units at IUPUI in an effort to create partnerships to enhance learning in the urban education Ph.D. is a wise and efficient approach.

Especially appealing is the interdisciplinary approach that will be used to “cross-train” doctoral students so that they have an understanding of the “systems approach” that must be used to understand, and ultimately transform, urban P-20 education. The proposed Urban Education Ph.D. program will prepare graduates with both the Urban Education cognate and a minor area of their choice outside of Education. Schools of education understand that urban education is a study that prepares an educator to focus on the challenge of educating multiethnic and poor children. The IUPUI program will also prepare researchers who are accustomed to being involved in the reform work of the schools in their communities. These educators will be capable of making a significant contribution to any educational context.

2. Is the program academically sound?

This proposed program is academically sound. Basics such as admission requirements, prerequisites, enrollment limits, financial support and curriculum and program overview are thorough and well developed. Most importantly, all of these areas are consistent with, and in some cases exceed, the criteria for existing doctoral programs at IUPUI.

The proposal mentioned that there are only 12 doctoral programs in urban education in the nation, and that a close examination of three of those programs served as a foundation for the academic constructs used in this program. The research conducted and the internal/external needs analyses revealed that a flexible approach was necessary to ensure success for students. The division of credits and coursework around the Major in Urban Education (36 credit hours), an Inquiry Core (12 credit hours), a Minor (12-18 credit hours) and Electives (9-15 credit hours) provides the necessary flexibility for students to bring in credit hours from approved MS/MA degree programs and still gain the necessary competencies for this doctoral program.

There are a total of 8 new courses that must be developed and the rest of the coursework in the four areas outlined above already exists. To develop the new courses in urban education is not an unrealistic burden, especially considering the existing faculty that signed on to this project as partners.

Finally, the Ph.D. Program Assessment Plan found in Appendix A is thorough, well developed and will ensure the success of the program. Objectives, benchmarks, data collection/analysis, timelines and champions are clearly defined and this plan is consistent with other academic program assessment plans that various academic units on campus currently use.

3. Are faculty resources available to offer this certificate without undercutting other key missions of the unit?

According to the proposal, "The implementation of the program will require hiring a faculty member with advanced knowledge and expertise in urban education the curriculum and staffing expert) and appointing an IUPUI faculty member as Urban Education Coordinator (temporary part-time administrative support based on one-course buyout a year). These two faculty members will work together with all others in the School of Education to finalize plans, create the needed infrastructure, and be responsible for oversight of the implementation of the program. This will include the development of recruiting, advising, and curriculum materials, being in contact with persons who have questions about the program, and establishing a Ph.D. Committee which will meet four times a year. These individuals will make sure courses are scheduled and staffed so as to ensure offerings at least once every two years. They will

also support faculty in the development of courses and attend to the vertical articulation of the curriculum. In addition, they will work with faculty, CUME and UCASE in planning for assistantships and internships in ongoing research projects.”

An “Urban Education Doctorate Committee” has been formed and a total of 21 IUPUI School of Education faculty are listed as being a part of this committee. This group is charged with development of new courses, teaching in the new program and monitoring success of the evaluation plan. They will also advise candidates and serve as mentors for inquiry and teaching internships. There are also 7 faculty from IUB that are listed as faculty for the new program.

Clearly, these faculty are experienced in graduate education and will lend expertise to various aspects of the doctoral experience that will benefit students. However, there are some concerns/questions that may need to be addressed:

1. Of the 28 IUPUI faculty listed, 7 have administrative positions (Deans, Associate Deans, Directors or Chairs) and 10 are Assistant Professors or Associate Professors that have yet to achieve tenure at IUPUI. Nearly 2/3 of the faculty listed do not yet have promotion or tenure. While the case can be made that this is exactly the kind of scholarship junior faculty should pursue to reach tenure, an opposing viewpoint might be that it is not a good thing to develop a doctoral program on the backs of junior faculty.

2. On page 24 of the proposal, there is a header titled “Additional Faculty at IU School of Education at IUPUI.” However, following this list are faculty lists from the IU School of Social Work, IU SPEA, IU School of Nursing and IUPUI School of Liberal Arts. Why are these faculty listed? I would recommend changing the header and providing a short explanation of why these faculty are listed and what they can add to the program.

4. Is there overlap, either real or potential, with any other unit that could harm the program or be exploited to help the program?

I do not see overlap with any other unit that could harm the proposed program or be exploited to help the program. However, there may be some internal programmatic questions that should be addressed. While I am not familiar with all of the doctoral degrees offered by the Indiana University School of Education, data from Appendix D suggest that close to 750 doctoral students enroll in existing doctoral programs at IUB and IUPUI. Some internal questions that might be addressed include:

1. Will this new program add to the current total of doctoral students at IUPUI and IUB?

2. Will this new program simply get existing students to “change majors” and go with the Ph.D. in Urban Education as opposed to existing doctoral programs? (Are we robbing Peter to pay Paul?)

3. Is there (should there be) a policy in place for students who transfer from an existing IUB or IUPUI doctoral program offered by the school of education?

While the implication is that students who apply to this program will be “new” students, the unit may find that there will be a demand for internal transfers from existing programs. The school of Education might think about this contingency.

5. My recommendation, comments/concerns regarding this proposal...

The Ph.D. in Urban Education proposal has my strong support! The proposal is carefully researched, well designed, and has the potential to be a unique, top-tier, doctoral program. The School of Education has significant resources in place to ensure the success of this new program, and the area of urban education will provide distinction as it dovetails perfectly with the urban mission of IUPUI.

I have one concern regarding objective #6 (see objectives listed above) dealing with the use of technology to enhance research, teaching and civic engagement that I would suggest this proposal address more thoroughly. There really is no data or information included about the number of existing or new courses that will be offered synchronously, asynchronously or using a hybrid approach. Additionally, there is no mention in the proposal about how research or civic engagement will be enhanced by the use of technology. Therefore, the issue of how “innovative technology that will enhance research, teaching and civic engagement of faculty and students participating in the program” is not addressed. Questions that might be considered regarding technology include:

1. Will new and/or existing courses be taught asynchronously or using a hybrid approach? If yes, then what platform will be used?

2. Will students be able to complete this Ph.D. program from a distance?

3. Must students serve the residency on campus or can they do that at a distance as well?

4. The issue of making the doctoral program ammenble to those students who wish to participate at a distance should be addressed.

