Mission Statement Assessment Activity Report  
Due April 21, 2017 to the Office of Academic Planning  

The Ed.D. Program in Educational Leadership  
Graduate College of Education  

To: The Office of Academic Planning, Attention Jane DeWitt  
From: Ed.D. Program Director, Barbara Henderson, Associate Program Director, Jamal Cooks, & Graduate Coordinator, Andrea Goldfien  
Date: April 21, 2017  

1. Most Recent Mission Statement for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Prior to Revisions  

The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership has a fully developed mission statement, which we have been operating under since our founding in 2007-2008 academic year. The program’s original leadership team developed the statement and students and faculty come into contact with it primarily through our program handbook and our website.  

The original mission statement is the following:  

This innovative program has a distinct mission: to prepare educational leaders who will transform California public schools and community colleges to enhance learning and achievement for all students. The program prepares leaders working in communities in which the predominant goals are to reduce gaps in learning and achievement and to equalize access to learning. To this end, the SF State Ed.D. program is centered on issues of leadership, equity, and social justice to close achievement gaps.  

The mission statement has served as a guide for the program over the past nine academic years, and is a touchstone for many of our decisions. These include considerations we weigh when making admissions decisions, planning the structure of the program, evaluating curricular content, adopting approaches to instruction, and guiding students towards a research focus for their dissertations.  

Two aspects of the mission statement provide us with the most significant guideposts for these decisions. First is our focus on creating a new generation of leaders for California’s P-12 public schools and community colleges. Second is our use of social justice and equity as the primary lens for understanding structural issues affecting education, and then for undertaking educational reform. As another observation, the program’s original mission statement is extremely well aligned with the university’s mission statement. We share core values with respect to our focus on social justice, serving the community, and the ethic of care.  

2. Process of Revising and Expanding the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership’s Mission Statement  

The current program leadership, including the program’s Executive Committee made a review of the mission statement in Spring 2017. The Executive Committee is the governing board of the program and consists of the administrative leadership team (the Interim Program Director, Interim Associate Director, Graduate Coordinator, and Administrative Office Coordinator), representative members of
the doctoral faculty from across the campus, and student representatives from each of the existing cohorts in the program (first through third year students).

The Executive Committee agreed that the mission statement is still reflective of the program’s goals, purposes, and values. We made some edits to the statement to streamline the prose and made one substantive change by deleting the phrase, “to close the achievement gap.” Even though a decade ago when the original statement was written, this language was appropriate, the committee agreed that the phrase is a problematic way to view educational reform. The term achievement gap frames an overly limited vision tied far too tightly to systems of testing and accountability that have had little to do with social justice. A focus on gaps is also a use of language that maintains a deficit view of minoritized groups, who continue to be poorly served by much of the system of public education.

Essentially the conversation with the Executive Committee allowed the program leadership to reconfirm our focus on preparing educational leaders for California and doing this through a social justice lens. This version of the mission statement is our revised short message mission statement.

Following this Executive Committee discussion, the administrative leadership team then worked to expand the mission statement to more specifically address a set of factors suggested by the materials provided by The Office of Academic Planning that are attached to the report templates. These additional factors included:

- the community of students the program serves,
- the language around our values that guide the program,
- the program’s learning environment, and
- our approach to the dissertation, because this is a feature that makes our program distinctive, even among the CSU Ed.D. programs, which all prepare leaders for the public schools and community college, and many of which are also guided by social justice.

This revised and expanded statement was shared with the Executive Committee and will be approved as written, or further modified by the end of the Spring 2017 semester.

3. The Ed.D. Program’s Revised Mission Statement

We have, therefore, developed a short mission statement for communication purposes and a longer version that will be more useful for future assessment purposes. The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership’s short mission statement is the following:

*Preparing educational leaders who envision and lead social justice reform for California public education from early childhood through community college.*

The longer version of our mission statement provides an additional focus on the students we serve, our learning environment, and the distinctive nature of program, as expressed through students’ culminating experience of researching and writing the dissertation. These details provide the program with a set of guidelines for evaluating programmatic and student outcomes. The long version of our revised mission statement is the following:
This applied doctoral program prepares educational leaders who will work in California public school settings including early childhood sites, elementary, middle, and high schools, and our community college system. The program strives to prepare a new generation of educational leaders who reflect the vast diversity of our state, and to that end, we honor the cultural and personal knowledge, as well as the resiliency that our students bring.

Our goal is to prepare leaders who can enhance development, learning, and academic achievement for all students. We prepare leaders who will work in our local communities to equalize student access to the cultural capital that a rigorous education based on open-minded inquiry and reflection can provide. San Francisco State University’s Ed.D. program is centered on issues of leadership, equity, and social justice and strives to use curricular materials and instructional methods that embrace this courageous approach. Our doctoral faculty are a multi-disciplinary group who are conducting research and taking practical action as public intellectuals around these same issues of social justice in education.

A distinctive aspect of our program is how the doctoral faculty conceptualize the dissertation as a problem of practice, a form of research most applicable for students earning an Ed.D. Specifically, we support our doctoral students to undertake practical and applied research including: evaluation projects, practitioner research, participant action research, self-studies, and non-traditional research forms, such as narrative inquiry, autoethnography, as well as other research genres that involve artistic or creative expression.

Regardless of form, the overarching goal for our graduates’ culminating research projects is that these original inquiry projects will make a positive difference in the educational opportunities California provides for all of its people. These culminating projects should also demonstrate the potential to create broader ripples of influence, as our graduates take on increasingly significant leadership roles in educational institutions and community organizations.

Our revised mission statement more fully articulates the program’s guiding purpose and identity, clarifies the educational value of its curriculum, highlights our distinctiveness, and aligns with the university’s broader public mission. In particular, our revised mission statement more clearly demonstrates how our program “honors roots, stimulates intellectual and personal development, promotes equity, and inspires the courage to lead, create, and innovate.”

4. Next Steps

The program will post our revised statement on the department web page by May 31, 2017 and the new statement will replace the old to our revised handbook for the 2017-2018 academic year. We believe this is important step for providing our future applicants with a clearer idea of our program. Just as important, it also provides current students, the doctoral faculty, and the administrative leadership team an updated and expanded set of goals, guiding values, preferred instructional approaches, and intended purposes to use for continued cycles of evaluating our program’s learning outcomes.