UCEA Research Utilization Brief:

FINDINGS FROM THE 2016 INSPIRE-PREPARATION PROGRAM (PP) SURVEY

University Council for Educational Administration

November 2016

Policymakers, preparation providers and other education constituents require data that are credible, relevant, and useful for evaluative and descriptive purposes. The *INSPIRE* Leadership Survey Suite offers valid and reliable data on both program features and short-term and long-term program outcomes and provides insight into the current state and quality of educational leadership preparation.

The *INSPIRE* Leadership Survey Suite is unique in that it gathers data from sources best positioned to provide insight to the leadership preparation structure, experience, and impact. Of the four separate surveys in the Suite, the *INSPIRE-Preparation Program (PP)* offers information about program structuring and the varying components that comprise a program. The *INSPIRE-PP* domains include: program structure and components, content, degrees/licenses/certifications, standards and accreditation alignments, personnel, the internship, assessment practices, participant demographics and support for program graduates.

This research brief highlights a sample of aggregated findings from the *INSPIRE*-PP. Ninety-seven UCEA member institutions from the United States are included in the findings, marking a 92% response rate (9% took the survey in the 2013-2014 academic year; 73% in 2014-2015; and 18% in 2015-2016). Findings included in this brief will be expanded upon in forthcoming publications.

Partnerships

Meaningful cooperation and relationships between universities and K-12 school districts are increasingly encouraged as a hallmark of effective leadership programs. Seventy-five percent of UCEA programs are engaged in purposeful partnerships with school districts, which involves identifying needs, developing shared goals, and ensuring the exchange of ideas. Almost half (47%) have memoranda of understanding with their partners. Thirty-one percent include district staff among their teaching faculty.

Whether offered in partnership with a district or not, UCEA programs make the accessibility of courses for their students a priority as evidenced by the 99% who offer classes in the evenings and over one-third (35%) offer at least some classes online.

Candidate Selection

Findings demonstrated that UCEA institutions engage in purposeful candidate selection processes. When selecting leadership students for program admittance, 93% of programs emphasized leadership potential as an important selection criterion. Selectivity, positions programs to capitalize on educators' leadership potential as they work to develop highly effective professionals.

Similar to other reports about the makeup of school leadership across the United States, the *INSPIRE*-PP results show that the demographic breakdown by race and gender vary greatly by program, but are made up primarily of White candidates. Some programs reported no candidates from underrepresented races, while others reported having diverse cohorts. In the aggregate, the number of females (avg. 19) slightly outnumbers males (avg. 11) for programs' most recent graduate cohorts.

Curriculum and Instruction

Once leadership students are enrolled in their UCEA preparation institution, they can be confident their programs reflect leadership standards, as all participating UCEA programs indicated alignment with one or more sets of state and/or national standards. Further, to instruct courses, full-time faculty members conduct the majority of instruction, while an average of 27% of courses are taught by adjunct/part-time instructors. This demonstrates UCEA institutions' emphasis on providing experienced and knowledgeable professionals to direct leadership preparation, a finding that corresponds with UCEA's requirements for institutional membership (www.ucea.org).

Each program reported using active instructional methods. For example, 95% of programs provide opportunities for students to work in small groups, 91% engage students in discussion, 95% offer authentic occasions to practice professional expectations through field-based, course-related projects, and 99% reported their program includes field-based work embedded in their internship.

Candidate Assessment

UCEA member institutions use a number of formative, summative, and program completion assessments to measure candidates' progress throughout the program. Ninety-nine percent of member institutions indicated that data collected from assessments are also used to help make programmatic decisions for improvement purposes. UCEA programs are expected to continuously strive to improve. Using data collected from their students to inform program improvement, suggests that UCEA programs are not only working to improve, they are placing their students at the center of their evaluation and improvement efforts.

Fieldwork

Regarding fieldwork, 96% of programs offer pre-service principals opportunities to engage in clinical experiences in settings with diverse student populations, and internships are structured to invite principal candidates to address real-world issues. In addition to developing skills, 91% reported matching their leadership candidates with mentors in a purposeful way.

Strong candidate support continued from fieldwork through program completion for most graduates. For example, when candidates are ready to assume a leadership role, many UCEA programs provide the following support: job interview assistance (54%), job counseling (40%), job referrals (59%), networking opportunities (68%), and ongoing mentoring (20%); some also provide induction programs (9%).

Closing Remarks

The *INSPIRE* Leadership Survey Suite offers a comprehensive opportunity for faculty, professionals, and other educational stakeholders to collect and analyze data in site-specific or aggregated ways. The *INSPIRE* Suite of instruments includes: (1) the Preparation Program (PP) Edition that captures major program features; (2) the Graduate (G) Edition that collects data on recent graduates' demographics, professional background, career intentions and graduates' assessment of their leadership program's quality and their own learning outcomes in standards-related leadership domains; and (3) the Leaders in Practice (LP) and 360 Editions that assess practicing school leaders' performance behaviors and related school conditions from the perspective of multiple educators serving in various roles within the school or district.

As a result of administering the *INSPIRE* Leadership Survey Suite overtime, programs will be able to compare results longitudinally, and, in the near future, programs will have the opportunity to combine results from different surveys in the INSPIRE Suite to inform their understanding of program quality and their decisions for improvement. To support these efforts, UCEA continues to develop supplementary materials and tools for programs to use for data-based discussions, evaluation planning, program design and accreditation review.

Finally, there exists potential for the *INSPIRE* Leadership Survey Suite to be used in conjunction with other assessment packages to provide a rich understanding of the different components of leadership preparation. It is through tools like the INSPIRE Suite that programs can use targeted data to purposefully make necessary programmatic changes to improve leadership preparation, thus strengthening the field as a whole.

uc ea *University Council for Educational Administration*

This research brief is part of UCEA's Research Utilization Brief series. The intent of the series is to highlight and share recent empirical research regarding effective leadership preparation and development with faculty, staff, and leaders at the program, institutional, and state levels, as these individuals are in positions to use this research to make positive changes. All research briefs in this series are available for downloading at http://ucea.org/research-utilization-briefs/