
A DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Devon Jensen, Georgia Southern University

ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the history of Higher Education as a field of study as described in the literature and uses this as a foundation to explore the current context of graduate programs in higher education administration through a descriptive analysis of existing programs in the United States. Data analyzed in this study consider graduate programs in higher education administration under the constructs of program demographics, application requirements, and program structure.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, there has been a growing interest in the field of Higher Education Administration. At the time of the writing of this document, a quick review of the Barnes and Noble website in the US listed 1401 books under the heading of Higher Education Leadership. The reality of this extensive amount of literature indicates that North American society wants to know more about Higher Education from how to pick the right college to how to be a women administrator in a university. The scope of the literature also represents the complexity of Higher Education. It further indicates that more and more academics and writers are researching and studying Higher Education as a separate and defined topic. Along with more researchers, there is a growing demand among learners to be educated in the field of Higher Education Administration. Conscious of this growth, the focus of this research was to conduct a demographic study of all graduate programs in Higher Education Administration across the United States. The intent was to survey the landscape of the programs to reveal a broader look at just what is currently happening with this field of study.

RETRACING THE FOOTSTEPS

Many of these current efforts into studying Higher Education trace back to the original ideas of Granville Stanley Hall who taught the first North American university course in college and university problems in 1893 at Clark University (Goodchild, 1996). Further evidence of a growing interest in Higher Education as a field of study came in 1930 with the first publication

of the Journal of Higher Education that has grown to become one of the pre-eminent journals on the issues of Higher Education. In this same year, Miller (1930) published an article that surveyed Masters and Doctoral Theses written on issues related to Higher Education between the years 1919 and 1928. In his research, he was able to locate 250 theses written about Higher Education. A total of 65 were at the doctoral level with 185 at the masters level. A breakdown of the doctoral studies revealed 31% of the theses focused on administration, 17% concentrated on issues pertaining to tests and measurements, 11% considered college teaching and teachers, an equal of 11% dealt with university curricula, another 9% focused on the history and description of Higher Education, with the final 6% on guidance.

Within the Journal of Higher Education, an article appeared in 1937 by Payne (1937) further justifying the need for continued research in matters related to Higher Education. Payne spoke of his concern that higher education of his time used trial and error practices related to leadership and curriculum in higher education. He expressed the desire to use research as a means to better understand just what was going on with higher education in North America. Another reference to Higher Education occurred in 1938 with the publication of "A University Course on The American College" (Eells, 1938). Eells, along with the American Association of University Professors, recommended that universities across the country offer a course on issues and problems related to the American college. It was deemed that any student wishing to pursue a career in college teaching take a class of this nature. Eells also felt that this class should be housed in the Faculty of Education.

The general aim of the course was to develop such understanding and attitudes concerning the history, objectives, organization, and administration of American higher education as to make the students taking it more effective university or college professors, more intelligent participants in the determination of college and university policies, and better interpreters of the institutions of which they might become a part to the communities in which they might be located. (Eells, 1938, p. 141)

In the same year of 1938, Palmer (1938) wrote an article that described Higher Education courses that were being offered throughout the summer of 1938 at various institutions. The intent was to have leaders and academics become actively involved in these classes. Some of the classes listed were: Organization and Administration of Colleges and Universities, Administrators in Higher Educational Institutions, Social Functions of Universities in Europe and North America, Curriculum and Method of Higher Education, Trends in Higher Education, and Functions and Problems of the College Registrar. Some of the universities involved in offering these courses were: Columbia University, The University of Chicago, Ohio State University, The University of Minnesota, and the University of Kentucky.

In 1948, Dykstra (1948) wrote an article that responded to the Report of the Presidents Commission on Higher Education published that year. He expressed concern over the balance among local, state, and national level issues related to the organization of the Higher Education system. He concluded with four statements of concern. First, he was concerned that the

Presidents Commission recommendation of strengthening state departments of education under a single board put too much power over education into the hands of a few. Second, a response to this was for each state to establish its own state commission on higher education. Third, from a national perspective, Dykstra saw validity in strengthening and expanding the role of the United States Office of Education. Fourth, he supported the need to create new mechanisms for increased coordination between state and federal systems of higher education.

Another historical moment - based on the current body of literature available in journals and periodicals - occurred in 1969 when James Rogers (1969) introduced readers to research on this topic with *Higher Education as a Field of Study*. The purpose of the study was to document the incidence of offerings in Higher Education at the doctoral level. The study included 137 institutions with a total of 86 reporting the existence of some kind of Higher Education programs on their campuses. A similar study occurred in 1970 with Palinchak's (1970) studied titled, *Survey of Requirements for a Doctoral Program in the Field of Higher Education*. The design of this study had faculty teaching classes in Higher Education respond to a survey instrument. The questionnaire surveyed faculty responses to matters such as the areas of study to be included in Higher Education and whether or not the program should have a scholarly or training approach.

Another important piece appeared in a work edited by Harclerod (1974). The compilation of writings grew out of a national conference of the Association of Professors of Higher Education. At the time, the writings clearly espoused the point that Higher Education was growing as a legitimate field of academic study. Some of the entries in the work included: *Doctoral-level Graduates with Higher Education as a Specialized Field of Study* by William Carr and *What Role for Professors of Higher Education?* by Samuel Kellems. A similar compilation of writings coming out the 1976 conference of the Association of Professors of Higher Education had equally important results – Higher Education was a growing field of academic study (Harclerod, 1976).

Also in the 1970s, Hobbs and Francis (1973) conducted research looking at the scholarly activities of professors who aligned themselves with the field of Higher Education. The effort in looking at this data was to begin to rationalize if there is a theory of higher education and can it be classified as a distinct field of study. Hobbs and Francis stated,

higher education is simply not a discipline. It is a multidisciplinary field instead, encompassing various phenomena which are conceptualized along several disciplines to which the discipline speaks. Indeed, one can hardly imagine higher education divorced from sociology, economics, history, philosophy, psychology, or political science. (p. 56)

In order to develop a true theory of higher education, they suggested a need for higher education theorists and appropriate publication channels with which to solicit their theories (p. 59).

In line with this request, one of the premier associations in the US for looking at issues related to Higher Education is the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). It has as its goals:

The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) promotes collaboration among its members and others engaged in the study of higher education through research, conferences, and publications, including its highly regarded journal, *The Review of Higher Education*. ASHE is committed to diversity in its programs and membership, and has enjoyed extraordinary success in involving graduate students in Association activities. (ASHE website, 2011)

On the Canadian side, the premier association is the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) with its journal, *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. This association's purpose is toward

the advancement of knowledge of postsecondary education through the dissemination through publication and learned meetings. The mission of the CSSHE is to facilitate and promote, by means of comprehensive partnerships and programs, the creation, dissemination and application of research of exemplary quality in postsecondary education in Canada. (CSSHE website, 2011)

These two associations with their linked journals are actively pursuing Higher Education as a field of study and providing the necessary venues for this to occur.

Research into Higher Education continued into the 1980s with Cooper's (1980) work titled, *Special Problems of the Professor of Higher Education*. Of central concern in this paper were how the professors viewed Higher Education as a field of study and how the campus environment supported this. Johnson (1982) further contributed to this body of literature by profiling faculty who teach in Higher Education. He surveyed 65 institutions with a total of 200 faculty responding to the survey instrument. Of the core findings, the participants viewed teaching along with their research and publications as central to the quality of the programs offered in Higher Education. This study was important in that it was one of the first studies to look at the characteristics of those who consider Higher Education as their chosen field of study.

According to data available at the time, by 1989 the US had 4476 students of higher education, 1306 at masters level and 3170 at the doctoral level (Adams, 1991). A 1987 survey of the directors of the 88 higher education doctoral programmes indicated that the major purpose of over 90% of these programmes was the educational training of higher education administrators (Townsend & Wiese, 1991). However, that same year McDade (cited in Schofield, 1996) reported that the professional development opportunities for middle level administrators in the US was disorganised, and not well developed. This work is evident of how important it is to look closely at programs of higher education administration and how they are structured and conceptualized.

Miller and Nelson (1993) turned attention to a review of actual course syllabi from HEA courses. Although there was really no analysis done by the authors related to course content and justification for their inclusion, it did allow educators to look closely at how their counterparts were designing curriculum. Some of the courses surveyed in the study included: History of

American Higher Education, Comparative Higher Education, Principles of College Teaching, The American Professoriate, and Legal Aspects of Higher Education. Continuing to look specifically at graduate programs in Higher Education, Miller and Vacik (1996) conducted a study to determine the characteristics of excellent HEA graduate programs. Based on a five-point rating scale, the University of Georgia's program in Higher Education Administration was rated as the most excellent among the 22 institutions who participated. Some of the characteristics that brought it to the fore were low student to faculty ratios, graduate student mentoring, quality advising, publishing development, and more full-time faculty. Although this study had a small sample population, it is important to the field of higher education in that it was the second look at how HEA graduate programs were functioning. The first was by Kiem (1983).

In 1998, Glenys Patterson took a close look at those who might be interested in completing a degree in Higher Education Administration. The focus of her commentary was on the ideal attributes and abilities of a university manager. In the piece, she addressed several important issues that all curriculum developers of HEA programs should address. These issues included: Should it be formal or non-certified programs? Should the training of university managers be mandatory, expected, or voluntary? Should it be undergraduate or post-graduate work? Should it have a university or broad tertiary focus? Should academics or administrators teach the courses? Should the outcomes be academic or purely practical? This commentary was challenging academics to ask serious questions about how HEA programs were conceptualized and their intended outcomes.

During the late 1990s and into the new century, much of the research into Higher Education Administration graduate programs has been about the quality of the programs. Are the programs relevant to the needs of the field? Is the curricular content educating graduates in those practices and theories they will face in the field? A good example of this type of research comes from Veronica Chukweumeka (2004). Her study assessed the review process for determining quality and accountability of two doctoral programs in Higher Education Administration. Conclusions from the study showed that these two programs initiated a review process for three main reasons: a) program improvement, b) resource reallocation, and c) program justification to protect existing resources.

Although this section shows an ample amount of literature looking at higher education as a field of study, we are still lacking in close analyses of what is actually going on in these doctoral programs. As stated by John Lauwery's, the Chief Registrar of the University of Southampton

Whatever happens, it is safe to predict that the future of higher education must be bright over coming years. We will increasingly be dominated by the knowledge society that will rely on more and more sophisticated IT systems and become increasingly international in character. The need to extend the boundaries of understanding and to transmit ever more complex knowledge to growing numbers of people cannot be in doubt. That will require the highest quality management and the most capable

higher education managers. That must be an encouraging prospect for the future of the profession of higher education management.

This demands that researchers and practitioners continue to inquire about what is going on in the field of higher education administration/leadership.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The objective of this research was to conduct a demographic study of all graduate programs offered in Higher Education Administration throughout the United States. The effort is to create a broad picture of the current context of this educational field of study. So in order to collect data for this study, the researcher individually visited every institutional website per state and conducted a manual search to determine if they offered a graduate program related to a study of Higher Education Administration or something similar. It is important to have a national understanding of what information is available or not available to potential students as they make decisions about which program to pursue. Since many potential students now use the internet to access information regarding these programs, the researcher recognized that this would be a valid approach for collecting data about the current context of doctoral programs in higher education administration. Using websites is exactly how the majority of potential students would access this information as well.

THE DATA

The researcher used the following variables for collecting data related to these programs.

Demographics	Application Requirements	Program Structure
State Institution Name Faculty Name Department Name Degrees Offered Degree Name Higher Education Administration Focus or Student Affairs Focus Mission/Purpose listed on website Number of Faculty Number with PhD Number with EdD Graduate Student data Year Program Established Number of hits to find the website from Institutional homepage	Online Application Form available Resume Needed in application Writing Sample needed in application Reference letters required Portfolio required with application Admission Deadline Date Undergraduate GPA needed GRE score	Program Delivery Method Residency Requirement Program hours to completion Number of Required Courses Number of Courses available in the program Number of Research Courses needed Dissertation hours needed Candidacy/Comprehensive Exam Thesis or Final Project Years to completion available

The data collected for this research came only from institutions that hold a university designation including both private and public universities in the United States.

# of Universities per State		# of HEA Programs	% to State total
Alabama	17	1	5%
Alaska	4	0	0%
Arizona	9	2	22%
Arkansas	13	1	8%
California	66	6	9%
Colorado	10	3	30%
Connecticut	12	2	17%
Delaware	2	0	0%
District of Columbia	10	1	1%
Florida	25	11	44%
Georgia	22	3	14%
Hawaii	4	0	0%
Idaho	5	2	40%
Illinois	33	9	27%
Indiana	24	5	21%
Iowa	11	3	27%
Kansas	15	2	13%
Kentucky	13	4	31%
Louisiana	15	1	7%
Maine	8	1	13%
Maryland	12	2	17%
Massachusetts	11	4	36%
Michigan	22	6	27%
Minnesota	19	2	11%
Mississippi	7	4	57%
Missouri	25	5	20%
Montana	5	1	20%
Nebraska	6	2	33%
Nevada	2	1	50%
New Hampshire	3	0	0%
New Jersey	13	2	15%
New Mexico	9	1	11%
New York	33	6	18%
North Carolina	21	6	29%
North Dakota	6	1	17%
Ohio	36	8	22%
Oklahoma	20	4	20%
Oregon	11	2	18%
Pennsylvania	44	10	23%
Rhode Island	5	1	20%
South Carolina	14	2	14%
South Dakota	6	1	17%
Tennessee	19	8	42%
Texas	58	10	17%
Utah	6	2	33%

# of Universities per State		# of HEA Programs	% to State total
Vermont	3	1	33%
Virginia	22	5	23%
Washington	12	2	17%
West Virginia	7	2	29%
Wisconsin	26	2	8%
Wyoming	1	1	100%
Totals	802	161	

This data indicates that there are currently 161 (or 20%) institutions offering some kind of graduate degree related to Higher Education Administration in the US. The state with the highest number of university institutions offering a degree in Higher Education Administration is Florida with 11. The next highest are Pennsylvania and Texas with 10 and then Illinois with nine institutions offering HEA programs. The state with the highest percentage of programs as compared to number of universities is Mississippi where 57% of the institutions offer an HEA program. The mean number of programs is six per state. There are also four states in which no HEA program is currently available. So on average, 92% of the states offer a graduate program related to Higher Education Administration.

Based upon the data collected for this study and the delimitations set forth to only view university websites, the following is a listing of the institutions offering some kind of graduate degree in Higher Education Administration.

State	University with HEA Program
Alabama	University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa
Alaska	None listed
Arizona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arizona State University • University of Arizona
Arkansas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Arkansas
California	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliant International University • Azusa Pacific University • California State University Sacramento • California State University San Francisco • Claremont Graduate University • Santa Clara University • Stanford University • University of California - Los Angeles • University of Redlands • University of Southern California
Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado State University • University of Denver • University of Northern Colorado
Connecticut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Connecticut State University • University of Connecticut
Delaware	None Listed
District of Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Washington University

State	University with HEA Program
Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barry University • Florida Atlantic University • Florida International University • Florida State University • Johnson and Wales University • Lynn University • Nova Southeastern University • University of Central Florida • University of Florida • University of South Florida
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia Southern University • Mercer University • University of Georgia
Hawaii	None Listed
Idaho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idaho State University • University of Idaho
Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benedictine University • Chicago State University • Illinois State University • Loyola University • National-Louis University • Northeastern Illinois University • Northern Illinois University • Northwestern University • University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign
Indiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball State University • Indiana State University - Terre Haute • Indiana University - Bloomington • Indiana University - Purdue University • Taylor University
Iowa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drake University • University of Iowa • University of Northern Iowa
Kansas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Hayes State University • University of Kansas
Kentucky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Kentucky University • Morehead State University • University of Kentucky • University of Louisville
Louisiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge
Maine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Maine- Orono
Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morgan State University • University of Maryland - College Park
Massachusetts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvard University • Suffolk University • U of M - Amherst • U of M - Boston

State	University with HEA Program
Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Michigan University • Eastern Michigan University • Michigan State University • Oakland University • U of M - Ann Arbor • U o M - Dearborn
Minnesota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capella University • Minnesota State University - Mankato
Mississippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson State University • Mississippi State University • University of Mississippi • University of Southern Mississippi
Missouri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast Missouri State University • St. Louise University • U of M - Columbia • U of M - Kansas City • University of Missouri - St. Louis
Montana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU - Bozeman
Nebraska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U of Nebraska - Lincoln • U of Nebraska - Omaha
Nevada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Nevada - Las Vegas
New Hampshire	None Listed
New Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rowan University • Seton Hall University
New Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico State University - Las Cruces
New York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornell University • New York University • SUNY - Buffalo • Syracuse University • University of Albany • University of Rochester
North Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appalachian State University • East Carolina University • Fayetteville State University • Johnson & Wales University • North Carolina State University • Western Carolina University
North Dakota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Dakota State University
Ohio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowling Green State University • Cleveland State University • Kent State University • Ohio State University • Ohio University • University of Akron • University of Dayton • University of Toledo
Oklahoma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Oklahoma State University • Oklahoma State U - Stillwater • Oral Roberts University • University of Oklahoma
Oregon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Fox University • Portland State University

State	University with HEA Program
Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drexel University • Indiana University of Pennsylvania • Marywood University • Pennsylvania State University • Robert Morris University • Temple University • University of Pennsylvania • U of P - Pittsburg • Widener University
Rhode Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson and Wales University
South Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Jones University • Clemson University
South Dakota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of South Dakota
Tennessee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Tennessee State University • Middle Tennessee State University • Tennessee State University • Union University • University of Memphis • U of T - Chattanooga • U of T - Knoxville • Vanderbilt University
Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abilene Christian University • Sam Houston State University • Texas A&M University - College Station • Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi • Texas State University • Texas Tech University • University of Houston • University of North Texas • U of T - Austin • U of T - San Antonio
Utah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Utah • Weber State University
Vermont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Vermont
Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason University • Liberty University • Old Dominion University • Regent University • University of Virginia
Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle Pacific University • Seattle University
West Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepherd University • West Virginia University - Morgantown
Wisconsin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U of W - Green Bay • U of W - Madison
Wyoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Wyoming

Each of these HEA programs are located within Education faculties. This research showed that no HEA programs existed outside of Education Faculties. This is consistent with directives set forth by the American Association of University Professors in 1938 where they

said studies in higher education should be housed in Faculties of Education. From the data collected, the most common faculty names where the Higher Education programs were housed included:

College of Education
School of Education
Faculty of Education
Graduate School of Education and Human Development
School of Education and Human Services

Within each of these faculties, the Higher Education programs were also situated within specific departments. The following is a list of the most common departments.

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Department of Higher Education and Organizational leadership
Department of Administration and Interdisciplinary Studies
Education Theory, Policy, and Practice
Department of Educational Administration
Educational Leadership and Research
Department of Administration, Leadership, and Technology

As a further element of the demographic data collected, a review of the programs showed that institutions were offering the following degrees with the focus being on the field of Higher Education:

Masters of Science (MS)
Masters of Science, Education (MSEd)
Masters of Arts (MA)
Masters of Education (MEd)
Educational Specialist (EdS)
Educational Doctorate (EdD)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Each of these degrees then had a focused speciality that was listed on the degree awarded:

Higher Education Administration (48% of the institutions used this name)
Higher Education and Organizational Change
Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs
Higher Education and Community College
Postsecondary Public Policy
Higher Education Leadership
Higher Education Administration and Policy

Adult and Higher Education
Higher and Postsecondary Education
Leadership for Higher Education
Higher Education Management
Educational Leadership – Higher Education

The following data lists a breakdown of the specific types of degrees offered in Higher Education throughout the institutions reviewed for this study.

Masters: 73 institutions or 45%
EdD only: 61 institutions or 38%
PhD only: 38 institutions or 24%
EdD/Phd combo: 62 institutions or 39%

One of the other core components of a graduate program is being able to understand what the program is trying to academically achieve for its students. As part of the data collected for this study, the researcher explored as to whether or not program websites were including a mission statement so potential students could see how that institution viewed higher education as a field of study. From the data collected, 87 of 161 or 54% of the programs had a mission or purpose listed on their website. In reviewing the institutional websites, the data collected showed that many of the websites told readers what the program was about, but a specific mission statement was not listed. Although this helps in understanding the management of the program, it indicates that most graduate programs of Higher Education are not sending a clear message about the theories which drive these programs. The following are some examples of mission statements that were included on institutional websites.

Our Mission is to prepare individuals for researching, analyzing, and managing the critical problems in postsecondary education. (Penn State University)

To graduate doctoral, educational specialist, and master's degree students who come from diverse backgrounds and who are characterized by their competence and confidence to be effective leaders in the higher education workplace. (University of Arkansas)

Our mission is to provide an opportunity for participants to extend their knowledge of academic organizations, their history, clientele, administrative functions; to develop an appreciation of the political, economic and social forces that influence the decisions of educational leaders; and to gain relevant experience in higher education administration. (University of Kansas)

In reviewing the program mission statements that were available, it became evident that Higher Education is not about “teaching” in higher education. This is very different to what

Eells (1938) indicated in his early conception of Higher Education programs. His intent was more about “college teaching” and interacting in the institution as a professor. A review of these current mission statements indicates that the current focus is not about preparing graduate students to be “educators” within postsecondary education in the traditional sense. These programs are not about faculty development or creating professors who are better classroom instructors. Instead, the overwhelming message from the mission statements is about being a leader within higher education institutions and systems. In so doing, these programs explore the theory and research related to the leadership, administrative practice, management, and delivery of all elements related to higher education institutions. This a very dynamic and diverse educational mandate.

Another demographic variable considered the general make up of faculty within graduate Higher Education programs.

Program Range: 2 – 15 (Note that the higher numbers in the range of faculty existed because the program of study was usually spread between Educational Leadership and Higher Education)

Mean was 8

Mode was 6

On average 55% of faculty held a PhD and 45% held an EdD. It is really difficult to determine the total numbers specifically in Higher Education because many of these faculty have responsibilities in multiple departments.

If we went by the Mean, it would imply that there are some 1288 faculty who work in Higher Education in some form or another. As a note, I did not collect data on female/male faculty in Higher Education. The problem here was that the data was retrieved from institutional websites and many sites only had name listings and no pictures and it is often difficult to determine gender just based on a name. I did not want to misrepresent the actual numbers.

Numbers of Students: This is based on data from The Digest of Education Statistics 2010 (nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011015.pdf)

Overall view

There were a total of 827,000 graduate students enrolled in the Field of Education in the 2007-2008 academic year

Of all students enrolled in graduate education in the 2008-2009 academic year, 23.9% were in the field of education. Data on students specifically enrolled in Higher Education Administration was not included in the Digest of Education Statistics 2010 report.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, there were 656,784 Masters Degrees awarded in the US and 67,716 Doctoral Degrees awarded in the US

- In the 2008-2009 academic year, there were 178,564 Masters and 9028 Doctoral Degrees awarded in Education
- Of all Masters degrees awarded, 27.2% were in the Field of Education
- Of all Doctoral degrees awarded, 13.3% were in the Field of Education
- In the academic year 2008-2009, there were no bachelor degrees awarded in Higher Education Administration
- In the academic year 2008-2009, there were 2,065 Masters degrees awarded in Higher Education Administration. 700 were to Males and 1,365 were to Females
- In the academic year 2008-2009, there were 384 Doctoral Degrees awarded in Higher Education Administration. 161 were to Males and 223 were to Females
- On a national level, of all Masters degrees awarded, 0.31% were in Higher Education Administration. Compared to Education Masters degrees, 1.2% were in Higher Education Administration
- On a national level, of all Doctoral degrees awarded, 0.57% were in Higher Education Administration. Compared to Education Doctoral degrees, 4.3% were in Higher Education Administration

Year Program Established

In terms of the year that programs were established, I could find no website information to indicate this on the various program websites. To get accurate data on this would require contacting each institution through email or phone to get this information. Due to the complexity of this, I did not pursue this further for this study.

Finding the Program on the Internet

Finding the HEA program websites from the main institutional page was a fun and challenging process and only got more refined and easier after going through the search around 20 different times. With the effort that it took me, it suggests that many students will have to do quite a bit of web searching to find the information they are seeking. Ease of access to institutional information is central to building positive relationships with potential students.

Process to find the HEA website:

Starting from the institution's homepage the most common hits were 5 to 7. This means you would have to go through about 6 web pages down the institutional website tree to find the HEA program

The easiest link to begin with was the "Academics" link which was available on 92% of University homepages.

From there, the next easiest link was the “Schools” or “Colleges” link.

Here you would find the “Education” link.

At this point, some websites have links listed on their homepage listing

Departments within the Faculty or School or just a Department’s link.

Some have you select between Graduate and Undergraduate Programs.

It is usually after this point that you can find the specific link for Higher Education program.

The process listed here is indicative of a typical search. Many institutional searches are much more complicated than this and required me going back and forth among pages and doing a lot of close reading to eventually find the website I needed. Based on my experiences, it would be worthwhile for chairs within Higher Education programs to work with college and university level web developers to make this process of finding the program website as easy as possible for potential students.

Application Process

Online Application form:

96% of the institutions had an online application form.

Resume needed:

47% of the institutions specifically required a resume/vitae to have a complete application package. Most institutions had this information included in the application form.

Writing Sample Required:

100% of the institutions needed applicants to submit some form of writing. Common writing samples requested included a “personal statement of purpose”, an example essay from a previous class taken, or a published paper.

Reference Letters:

100% of the institutions required 3 letters of reference

Portfolio:

24% of the institutions indicated that a portfolio could be included in the application package

Undergraduate GPA:

97% of the institutions required a 3.0 GPA

GRE Score:

Required scores ranged from 1000 to 1500.

The mode score was 1200

Program Details

Delivery Method:

142 or 88% of the programs are on-campus delivery with evening and/or weekend classes

19 or 12% offer some kind of blended online/on campus structure

Residency requirement:

There were two main categories here. It was either that there was no residency required or it was one full academic year. This meant being registered as a full time student for at least one academic year. It was about 73% of the institutions requiring full time enrolment for one academic year.

Number of Required Courses:

Range: 30 - 96 credit hours

Mode: 60 Credit hours

Number of Research Courses:

Range: 3 – 15 credit hours

Mode: 9 Credit hours

Number of Dissertation Hours

Range: 9 -15 credit hours

Mode: 12 Credit Hours

Candidacy/Comprehensive Exam:

88% of institutions required a candidacy or comprehensive exam. Note: this could be slightly higher as several institutions did not provide this information on their website.

Years to completion:

All programs or 100% listed 7 years available to complete the degree.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In considering the process of collecting this data and what it says about higher education as a field of study within graduate programs, I must reflect back on the words of Paul Dressel (1974, cited in Harclerod) in a similar study he conducted:

Our survey demonstrates that higher education as a degree-granting program has reached significant dimensions in offerings, in specialities provided, in degrees available, in faculty, in degrees already awarded, and in current enrollments. (p. 35)

This is still the current state of higher education programs across the United States. I found it very telling at just how many higher education institutions offer this specialty program.

Pretty much every state offers a degree within the area Higher Education Administration. It suggests that the program is a legitimate entity both for the content and theory which it explores and for students wanting to study and research it. Another element that came out of this study was that these programs remain within Faculties or Colleges of Education. If one considers that the mission of the programs is to focus on the “leadership” or “administrative” side of higher education, it would not be too far-fetched to begin to house these programs within Business Schools for example. It sends a message that the theories of higher education are unique and have their own history that is separate from “business” theories of leadership or management. As such, these graduate programs remain within the faculties where they most align - Education. Overall, this is a philosophical shift from the beginning conceptions of Higher Education programs in the early part of the 1900s where it was more about training “college professors”. I couldn’t help but also reflect on just how complex the topic of Higher Education is. This was evident in the degree names that institutions are using for their Higher Education programs. There are some programs that cover the whole spectrum of adult and higher education where others are very focused on higher education management. It would be interesting to find out what decision making went into determining program names at particular institutions. Like Dressel, I also found it very difficult to determine exact numbers of faculty who have Higher Education as their focused field of study and teaching. The difficulty here is that many of these programs are blended with Educational Leadership (K-12) programs and so faculty have responsibilities with both. Due to this fact, I don’t think we will ever have accurate numbers. As mentioned in the body of the paper, it was unfortunate that only 54% of the institutions had a specific mission statement for their higher education programs. If academics want students and administrators to know that the programs are strengthened by the theories of higher education, it is essential that we work from mission statements that drive this vision and not get caught into the “how to’s” of the programs. Basing Higher Education programs on “what we are about” is a very surface perspective. Establishing mission statements (and advertising them) that are founded on core theoretical frameworks of higher education will help to further legitimize this field of study.

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