

Doctoral Digest

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A newsletter for all cohort members in Western Kentucky University's Doctorate in Education Program

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Holiday Party
- 1 Cohort's Corner
- 2 Calendar of Events
- 3 What's Up, Doc?

Holiday Party

End of the year reception planned for Cohorts



The Office of Doctoral Studies would like to invite each of you to our Holiday reception. The reception will be on **December 12, 2009, from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm at the WKU Faculty House**. The WKU Faculty House is located between Cherry Hall and Garrett Conference Center. All three cohorts (students only) are invited to attend. Food will be served and we will also have a fun surprise for everyone! Expect a night of fun, food, and friendship! We hope to see you there!

New Face at Doc House

Ken Akers hired as Graduate Assistant

Ken Akers started his graduate assistantship with Dr. Wagner on October 19. Ken is from Elizabethtown, KY and is a graduate of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Ken is currently a graduate student at Western Kentucky University pursuing a master's degree in Counseling and Student Affairs. Welcome Ken!

Cohort's Corner

What is going on in the lives of your Ed.D family?

In the midst of researching, reading, editing, and learning statistics, you may forget that you each have personal lives. To keep you connected, here is the inside scoop on your fellow cohort members.

Superintendent Screening Committee

Cohort I member Dan Costellow was recently selected by Warren County school teachers to serve on Warren County's Superintendent Screening Committee. The committee will review applications for the superintendent position. Three to five finalists will be sent to the Warren County Board of Education for interviews. The committee consists of 2 teachers, 1 principal, 1 parent, 1 classified member, and 1 board member. Good Luck Dan!

Doc Ning

Have you joined the Doc Ning? If you don't know that lingo, you haven't joined! Any member of Cohorts 1-3 is eligible! Matthew Constant (Cohort 1) has created the ning for students to communicate across cohorts. He sent out invitations by email to all members. If anyone did not receive the invitation, just let him know at matthew.constant@daviess.kyschools.us. The ning is a place to see upcoming events, recent photos, upload videos, respond to forums, leave messages, post documents, and so much more. Take a little time to visit soon!

www.wkudocprogram.ning.com

WKU Doctoral goes to Washington!

WKU Doctoral Studies was well-represented in our state capitol by four of our very own cohort students: Cindy Ehresman, Jace Lux, Tim Gott, and Leigh Anne Roden. The group of students joined Dean Sam Evans and Provost Barbara Burch in Washington D.C. to attend the Renaissance Group Conference. **(See last page for a detailed account of their trip.)**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 EDLD 711 Teresa Spann
8 EDLD 711	9	10	11	12	13 EDLD 700	14 EDLD 700 Matthew Constant
15	16	17	18 Audrey Harper	19	20	21 Eric Gregory
22	23	24	25	26 Happy Thanksgiving!	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 Lesley McConn	4	5
6	7	8 Dianne Bowles	9	10	11 EDLD 700 and 720	12 EDLD 700 and 720 Doc Reception Stephanie Cornwell
13	14 Final Exams Week	15	16	17 Donna Hey	18	19 Commencement
20	21 Winter Break Begins	22 Winter Break	23 Winter Break	24 Winter Break	25 Winter Break	26 Tracy Inman
27	28 Winter Break	29 Winter Break	30 Winter Break Adam Cross	31 Winter Break		

JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Winter Break Happy New Year!	2
3	4 Winter Term Begins Chris Schmidt & Kim Vickous	5 Tuition due Anthony Kirchner	6 Benny Life & Kim Anderson	7 Terry Elliot	8	9 Greta Jones & Carmen Varney
10	11	12	13	14	15 Tuition due (register before 12/6) Jennifer Huskey	16 Wes Cottongim
17	18 Classes Not In Session	19 Jace Lux	20	21	22 Winter Term Ends	23
24/31	25 Spring Semester Begins	26	27	28	29	30

Ed.D. Brochures

Doctoral Studies brochures are available to you!

The Doctoral Studies House has informational brochures available for anyone interested about the Doc Program. If you would like us to mail you some brochures, send an email with your mailing address to doctoral.studies@wku.edu.



*SCHOOL-RELATED * WORK-RELATED *PERSONAL LIFE

Interested in tutoring? Need a study group? Want to carpool to your next class? Use the next newsletter to connect with your classmates. Promotion? Relocating? Keep your Ed.D. family in the loop by announcing your news flash in the next newsletter. Getting married? Expecting an addition to the family? We want to hear about it! Email your news to us at emily.dillard@wku.edu or doctoral.studies@wku.edu and we will include it in the next newsletter.



Tailgate Party

Thank you to all who came out on that cold Saturday to tailgate at the Doc House! It was a fun time together to show our school spirit and take a break from all of your hard work!

Did You Know?

- The Doctoral Studies house is always available for any student to come and complete homework.
- The Doctoral Studies parking lot (located directly behind the house) is open for any Doc student to park—whether you are visiting us or doing other things around campus.

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

LACK OF COMPETITION

By Christopher R. Wagner, Ph.D.

Interim Program Director

We are about to begin the admissions process for Cohort IV and it is one of the busiest times of the year for us in the doc house. All fall I have been recruiting high- quality applicants, fielding questions about the program, speaking at various events to explain the program, and trying to share the concept of “cohort” with those interested. “What is a cohort?” is the most common question. I attempt to answer by saying that it is not a “what” but it is a kind of behavior.

I am even more thrilled to be in this position this year because I have an opportunity to brag on you and your “cohort behavior”. It begins with your concern for one another. And includes your “chit-chat” on the net, your checking things out with respect to courses, instructors, and assignments, the professional civility you are willing to afford those with whom you do not agree, but mostly, your lack of competition. That's right, your LACK of competition!

I do believe there is a place and time for competition and that it is sometimes healthy, but not in this program. There is no need for competition in a group of people who are willing to share information. There is no room on a team for those who do not support others and demonstratively communicate how much

they value and appreciate each other. There is no need to “beat” anyone since we all have the same goal.

What are “cohort behaviors”? It begins with collegial, respectful conversations that help to develop deep trust. It is also about finding out who we are individually and as a group. What are our strengths and limitations? It continues in a process called academic collaboration and sounds like: “Let's all work to clarify the assignment. What did the prof say? Who knows about this stuff? Can someone please help me?” It is about understanding each other, their goals and your goals and the extent we will go to be successful in the attainment of the goals. It is also about owning your responsibilities and being a dependable team member.

One of your peers once told me, “This is not a program for loners.” Excellent observation, I thought. I guess there is a choice but I firmly believe that the strength represented within the cohorts assures a much greater chance of success.

You have all taught me so much about relationships and how they impact cohorts. Watching the dynamics of this process is an adventure unto itself. Thank you so much for the lessons you are teaching me.

“Power is like love. When you give it away, it does not diminish your supply.”

Doc Students Participate in The Renaissance Group Conference

Cindy: The phone rang and it was official: I was going to Washington, DC with a group of three other WKU doc students – mission undetermined. The conference was the 20th anniversary meeting of the Renaissance Group (TRG), an elite consortium of schools from across the country whose membership embraces the central theme of an “all campus orientation and commitment to teacher education.” The opportunity might have begun with a soft-sell from Chris Wagner, “an all-expense paid trip to DC,” but after meeting with the Provost it was obvious there are indeed “no free lunches.” We were going to represent the WKU Ed.D. program and to work for TRG as they went through a series of planning sessions to determine priorities for the coming years. The “free trip” suddenly turned into a 3-hour practicum and months of work for the organization.

Tim Gott, Jace Lux, and I secured the last three seats on the early flight to DC and Leigh Anne Roden rode along to Nashville airport, left an hour before us, stopped off in Chicago, and made it to the hotel with just enough time to change and get to our training session with TRG board members and session facilitators. Our charge as “recorders” was to capture all the information as the membership split into brainstorming groups and rotated to each of our rooms. Our topics were organizational mission and vision, membership and governance issues, preparation for educators, and influencing public policy. After collecting and compiling the information we joined with our session leader to present the results of the work to the conference participants. This might sound like an easy task – but a quick peek at the conference demographics encouraged us to perform at our best. Most of the attendees were presidents, provosts, and academic deans from member institutions. (No pressure!)

After the training we had about 20 minutes to relax before the opening meeting which was followed by a lavish reception (i.e., free food and networking opportunities for us). The next morning we reported bright and early for what proved to be the single most aggressive conference schedule I’ve ever been exposed to. This group does not take time away from their other important duties lightly and they obviously believe in maximizing the time together. The guest speaker of the morning was Undersecretary of Education Martha Kanter who presented the administration’s expectations for higher education leaders to fully participate in overhauling the US education system.

Jace: After “Martha” (honest, that’s what she likes to be called!) spoke, it was time to earn our keep and begin the sessions. I spent my morning listening to university presidents, provosts, and deans discuss what TRG can do to further education at all levels in our country. Their passion for ensuring that all of us receive the best educational opportunities possible was inspiring. My session leader was Dr. Larry Peterson, Dean of the College of Science & Mathematics at Kennesaw State University. He was one among the many inspiring individuals I had the pleasure to meet in D.C.

After the morning session was over, we were treated to an elaborate luncheon on the top floor of the hotel. The speaker was Bill Ayers from the University of Chicago. I had read his bio in our program packet, and I knew that the name sounded familiar, but I just couldn’t place where I had heard of him before. On the elevator ride up, Dr. Peterson refreshed my memory. He was part of a radical group called the Weather Underground that was responsible for several bombings of buildings and statues in protest of the Vietnam War in the 60s and 70s. His name had come up numerous times during the most recent presidential election because of the fact that he had served on some non-profit boards with Obama. Needless to say, I was anxious and hesitant to hear him speak.

All anxiety was lost, however, when I stepped off the elevator and was met with stunning 360 degree views of downtown Washington, Georgetown, and Arlington. As Dean Evans put it, I would have been happy to just pull a chair over to one of the windows and stare at the sights for the entire lunch hour! But I did what I was supposed to do, grabbed a plate and sat at a table near the podium. I caught sight of the infamous Dr. Ayers standing in a corner waiting to be introduced. Surely that man in his mid 60s with earrings and tennis shoes isn’t the infamous Bill Ayers? After a brief introduction, he took the podium, and all my preconceived thoughts about him were soon cast out the window. He was engaging, funny, and brilliant, and delivered a captivating message. Well, I should disclose that I was captivated until I noticed out of the corner of my eye a small speck in the sky that continued to grow bigger until I realized it was Marine One flying right past our hotel, parallel to our luncheon area! Anyway, we made it through the lunch incident-free, and even had the opportunity to meet Dr. Ayers and have our pictures taken with him. I cautiously eyed the backpack at his feet, hoping he had truly outlived his radical bomber days, but all in all, it was quite an impressive encounter. Leigh Anne scooped up one of his donated and autographed books.....and a \$100 gift card in a door prize drawing just a few hours later. We made it through the work of the day intact and were rewarded with a special meal in Georgetown. Dinner was over early and by 9:00 the four of us were on the subway making our way to the Lincoln Memorial. We walked for nearly four hours and saw most of the famous sites - all of which were spectacular under a nearly-full moon.



WKU Doctoral students with the United States Secretary of Education.

Left to Right: Tim Gott, Cindy Ehresman, Secretary Duncan, Leigh Anne Roden, and Jace Lux

Tim: As we toured the memorials and monuments, my mind raced with many thoughts: how fortunate we are to live in such a great country, what sacrifices have been made for America and me personally, what an incredible opportunity I have been given, and what a tremendous responsibility I have to take the baton and move it forward in a significant way. The four of us shared similar reflections with each other and found great comfort in our common themes. In particular, the day behind us had opened our eyes to the substantial role that teacher education holds in the cycle of education as a whole. TRG and the member universities desire to be a strong link in the chain that holds teaching to high standards. As we had explored throughout the day what the demands and needs are and will be for teacher preparation in the days ahead, it dawned on me how essential and necessary it is to address these challenges in a strong and prominent way. As we walked by the reflecting pool with the images of Lincoln and Washington in our heads, we felt honored to play a small role in this meaningful dialogue that will impact teachers and, more importantly, students for years to come.

Cindy: If that were the end of the story it would be enough ... little did we know that the best was yet to come. The last speaker of the conference was Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. He and his entourage arrived right on time and wowed the entire crowd (of these heavy hitters). He is young, energetic, charming, personable, and deadly serious about a radical transformation of education in this country. He was right on task with a short speech that showed his staff had done their homework - he knew his audience - and purposely left the bulk of the 30 minutes allotted for a dialogue with TRG members. After a standing ovation he posed for a quick photo with TRG board members and his group whisked him out the door. Jace stood up, quickly rallied us to step outside the box, and we sent Leigh Anne (youngest) chasing after him. She caught the group at the top of a long flight of stairs and Secretary Duncan graciously stopped his entourage, greeted and shook our hands in turn, and then arranged us for the photograph. Wow – it was a real moment for all of us! Takes a lot to make the four of us giddy – but this was a phenomenal experience and we wouldn't really need a photo to remember this day.

Leigh Anne: We started to get our bearings after our once-in-a-lifetime meeting with the Secretary of Education and we realized that all good things must come to an end (although I was a little disappointed that “the big guy” didn't make his appearance, as the initial phone call from Dr. Wagner had implied). We sat through the final business meeting because you had to be present to win an Italian getaway and I saw a few unfamiliar faces making their first appearance at TRG's conference. After winning a \$100 gift card the day before, I was determined to win the coveted trip for two to Italy; I was finding it hard to focus as visions of Florence and Rome danced in my head. Dr. Gionavetti, the executive director of TRG, requested a doctoral student volunteer to come fish out the winning ticket. Cindy and Jace rushed me out of my seat to the front of the room. Drum roll please ... and the winner is ... Dr. Steven Brown from Emporia State University in Kansas. He was my partner during the working sessions so I am guessing that my good fortune rubbed off on him. We posed for a final group picture and the fall 2009 gathering of TRG was now over; it was time for us to retrieve our suitcases, return home and reflect on our experiences.

From the initial dinner with Dr. Burch and Dr. Wagner I never would have guessed the four of us would have had such a great connection. Being the youngest of the bunch, I was just hoping to have a good time, make some connections, and meet “the big guy” (right, Dr. Wagner?) but I realized that it was so much more than that. We will now work diligently to earn our three hour practicum and I look forward to the time we will spend together to do so. From our car ride to the airport to meeting Dr. Ayers to fine dining at Filomena's to shaking the hand of the Secretary of Education, we became a mini cohort through these unforgettable experiences. The end of the trip ignited a new beginning for the four of us in the continued pursuit of our doctorate degrees; I know we are all looking forward to what the future holds while we continue on our paths that we found out are not so different after all.