April 19, 1991

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Jayne Standley, Chair
Graduate Policy Council

From: Dr. Gary Peterson, Associate Dean
College of Education

Re: Ed.D. vs. Ph.D.

Enclosed is a report developed by the Inquiry Skills Task Force pertaining to the delineation of clearer distinctions between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. degrees in the College of Education. This issue has been important to us in the College as it has been to members of the review committees of the Graduate Policy Council.

Dean Lathrop has directed all department heads to implement the recommendations of the Task Force this coming Fall of 1991. In this regard, we would like you to relate to all future review committees that they should inquire about this distinction. Please have them review selection criteria, student course programs of study, and dissertations with the distinction of the Ed.D. and Ph.D. in mind.

If you have any questions about the document, please do not hesitate to call me at 4-6885.

Thank you for your attention.

GWP/pw

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Russell Johnsen, Dean
Dr. Robert Lathrop, Dean
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dean Robert L. Lathrop and Staff

FROM: The COE Inquiry Skills Task Force, I. R. Grant, Chair

RE: Report of the Task Force

Date: March 1, 1991

(1) On July 16, 1991 you appointed our task force to "review whether the college should make a clearer policy distinction between the requirement for the Ed.D. and the Ph.D. degrees in the College of Education."

(2) The members of the committee were:

Drs. Brewer, English, Glidden, Jenks, Leslie, Macmillan, Oosterhof, Pargman, Peterson, Routh, Scott, Tait, and Tucker, with Sydney Grant as Chairperson, and Pat Wilson as secretary to the committee.

(3) We are attaching in an appendix the various documents produced or assembled in our work. Although we have completed our task, we wish to say that our committee represented many diverse opinions, and we felt we could have discussed these issues for a long, long time. But - we "drew the line."

(4) As a result of our work, we wish to make the following recommendations.

(5) We take into consideration the following at this time (January 1991):

(a) Only one department (Ed. Leadership) has any stated policy and practice regarding the two degrees.

(b) Only two departments (Ed. Leadership and Ed. Foundations and Policy Studies - (in the Adult Ed. specialty)) are actually using the Ed.D. degree option, while the rest of the departments appear not to be doing so.

(c) We as a committee affirm that both degrees should be of equal rigor and value within their appropriate frameworks and contexts, but these contexts and frameworks need to be spelled out in greater detail.
(d) Each department knows its unique situation and needs, and the requirements of the professional field(s) it represents. Any actions and plans regarding the Ed.D. and Ph.D. must be considered at the department level for the most effective results.

(e) Departmental consideration of these degrees could be done effectively in a short period of time, given the preparatory work by our committee, and if the "charge" were clear and specific.

(6.) We recommend:

(6.1) That each department in the COE be asked to review and discuss its past policy and practices regarding the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. degrees in light of present and future needs, and spell out the distinction for each degree.

(6.2) That each department will distinguish between these degrees and develop a written statement that addresses the Ed.D. degree as a necessary and viable option in that department, along with the Ph.D. option.

(6.3) That this be done both in the remainder of the present Spring 1991 semester and during the Fall 1991 semester.

(6.4) That the written statements from the departments be reviewed, modified (if necessary by collaborative accord by GAC with each department), and approved as the new working policy for the department.

(6.5) That the policy and practices evolved by the departments fit within the language and intent of the 1990-1991 FSU Bulletin.

(6.6) That each department utilize the following checklist and platform for its work:

(6.6.1) The crucial points in Ed.D. - Ph.D. considerations are:

(A) Admissions of students to the Department
(B) The Course of Study Requirements for the Ed.D. - Ph.D.
(C) The Nature of the Prospectus and Dissertation for the Ed.D. - Ph.D.
(D) Other pertinent considerations.

(6.6.2) We treat these points separately below as "grist for the mill." They are meant as a guideline for discussion.
(7.) Admission of Students to the Department

(7.1) One department decides at admission time whether the student will be in a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. program. This decision is based on the student's background, work experience, and expressed career goals. Once the decision is made, the student may not switch over to the other option.

(7.2) Other departments admit the student into a "doctoral program," and only later decide the student will be working for the Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree. When should this decision be made: at the "diagnostic exam" (after the first semester), at the "preliminary" or "qualifying" exam, or even at some other time? Further, on what basis is the decision made?

(7.3) Clearly, this is an important issue, and one that may have legal as well as academic aspects.

(8.) The Course of Study Requirements for the Ed.D. or Ph.D.

(8.1) The doctoral level course of study is supposed to reflect the student's past experience, his/her career goals, the type of dissertation he/she plans to write, and the requirements of the academic field. Courses of study represent a blend of these four factors, and perhaps others.

(8.2) In some institutions, the course work takes these four major factors into account in the light of whether the student is in a Ph.D. or in an Ed.D. Program.

(8.3) This could mean different courses of study for the Ed.D. student and for the Ph.D. student. It could mean a foreign language or research methods sequence for one or the other degrees. In most cases, however, students in both degree tracks will take many of the same courses together. The question then is: are there any courses specifically generic to the Ed.D. in the department, or to the Ph.D.? This ought to be clarified and spelled out.

(9.) The Nature of the Prospectus and the Dissertation for the Ed.D. - Ph.D.

(9.1) The type of dissertation is often the major distinguishing characteristic in determining if the student is doing a Ph.D. or an Ed.D.

(9.2) The FSU Bulletin (1990-1991) states for the Ph.D.:
"A doctoral dissertation must be completed on some topic connected with the major field of study. To be acceptable it must be an achievement in original research constituting a significant contribution to knowledge and represent a substantial scholarly effort on the part of the student." (p. 30)

(9.3) The FSU Bulletin (1990-1991) states the following for the Ed.D.:
"The Doctor of Education degree is offered by the College of Education, the School of Music, and the School of Visual Arts and Dance. (p. 31)

"Potential candidates for this professional degree are selected on the basis of experience, skills, and goals of the students seeking admission to the programs in which the degree is offered."
"Such students will ordinarily have had some years of teaching or academic administrative experience and have shown some promise of being able to develop their pedagogical or administrative skills through further research and training. The College of Education permits, as part of its experience requirement, the completion of a practicum, undertaken during the period of doctoral studies, in which the student engages in doctoral work-related activities within an external agency. Once the degree has been earned, its possessor should be able to perform the tasks of the profession with a high degree of efficiency.

"The Doctor of Education degree is further distinguished from the Doctor of Philosophy degree by the nature of specific training (although there may be a core of studies common to the two curricula) and by that of the dissertation.

"The training is designed to fit the goals of individual students, under the careful guidance of a supervisory committee; and since the purpose of the dissertation is to provide solutions to educational problems as they arise in the field, it shall be designed to deal with methodological or administrative procedures capable of providing such solutions. Students are therefore advised that their programs must include enough methodological inquiry to establish a basis for the procedures used to arrive at their conclusions.

"In light of the above, the distinction between the Doctor of Education and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees cannot be made solely on the basis of research tool requirements. Depending on the dissertation project proposed, the candidate's supervisory committee may require as much training in such research tools as statistics, foreign languages, computer languages, or other programming techniques as necessary to complete the project.

"The provisions of this section indicate steps leading to the Doctor of Education degree that differ from those leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree."

(9.4) The foregoing does not specifically spell out dissertation differences, but clearly calls for distinctions between the Ed.D. and the Ph.D.

(9.5) Some institutions spell out dissertation requirements for the Ed.D. that feature projects as dissertations: e.g. the writing of a math textbooks, the development of a school mapping plan, the evaluation of a high school science education program, or other practical and substantial projects that are not only useful, but that also prove the author's ability to carry out important, major professional work in line with his/her chosen field. (In the past, these dissertations were a breakthrough in legitimating professional educators work, and freeing it from the narrow and sometimes insignificant studies done to satisfy the original, traditional Ph.D. dissertation.)
(9.6) One way to approach these issues is for each department in our College to examine the twelve most recent dissertations earned in the department to see, ex post facto, how they might fit into the "applied and practical area" as contrasted with the more traditionally based Ph.D. dissertation.

(10) We recommend that each department carry out a self-study on these Ed.D. - Ph.D. issues, and that it spell out in writing, in detail, the difference between the two degrees as they touch upon the points mentioned in 6.6.1 above. In doing this, each department should:

(10.1) Be in line with the statements on these degrees in the FSU bulletin, and,

(10.2) Consider both degrees to be equal in value and rigor.

(11) You may wish to use this present memo as the guideline from your office for the departments to carry out their work.