

# Great Teaching and Leading Fund FY17 Annual Report

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## Nevada Leads

### Summary

#### Program Name & Overall Goals/Objectives of Program

Program Name: Nevada Leads

Goals & Objectives:

1. Align Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) for Site Administrators with the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL)
2. Revise Educational Leadership M.Ed. course syllabi, scope and sequence of coursework, and structure of the internship to reflect alignment between the PSEL standards and NEPF.
3. Engage highly effective current building and central office administrators as partners in building the overall scope and sequence of Educational Leadership M.Ed. coursework, as co-instructors, as mentors to M.Ed. students, and as program evaluators.
4. Graduate one cohort of 25 highly qualified aspiring educational leaders in 2 years, and then yearly thereafter.

#### Abstract and Results Overview

The launch of the new Nevada Leads program was highly successful. Prior to the fall of 2016, the NEPF for Site Administrators was aligned with the 2015 PSEL Standards (Goal 1). During the fall of 2016, a new course scope and sequence was created, the internship structure was revised, and the first course syllabi were reviewed and revised (Goal 2). Also during the fall of 2016, the first cohort of mentor principals was recruited, and several assisted with the scope and sequence revision (Goal 3). Teams including University of Nevada, Reno faculty and Washoe County School District principals and central office administrators were created for each course syllabus revision, and mentor principals were recruited to co-teach the first semester's courses (Goal 3). Finally, potential teacher leaders were recruited during the fall semester, applications were reviewed, and our first cohort of 25 students was admitted to begin in January 2017 (Goal 4).

#### Next Steps

Next steps include: (1) finalizing the revisions of all remaining courses, (2) recruiting the second cohort of students and mentor principals to begin the program in January of 2018, and (3) graduating cohort 1 in December of 2018. In the spring of 2018, we will have 2 cohorts moving through the program, thus doubling the number of courses offered each semester. Next steps also include dissemination of the program design and results at

national conferences, and analysis of data collected for the purpose of program evaluation and academic publications.

Grant Funded Activities (Complete items a. – e. for EACH activity.)

Activity 1: University-District Partnership

- a. **Overview:** At the outset of the establishment of this program, a strong University-District was absolutely essential to its success. Both the University’s College of Education and Washoe County School District leadership teams were highly motivated to collaborate by the desire to graduate well-prepared aspiring educational leaders. UNR and WCSD leaders—including full-time and adjunct faculty, school and central office administrators, and a consultant—outlined a comprehensive Internship experience, expanded to take place throughout the two years of coursework rather than a single semester, and created the scope and sequence of the Nevada Leads coursework. Courses were intentionally placed into the program based on the activities acting principals would be doing in the months during which the courses would take place (e.g., the course on personnel was placed in the spring semester, when principals are evaluating and hiring new teachers). An initial retreat was held in September of 2016 to begin this work.
- b. **Participant Information** (who, roles, how many, demographics, etc.)

Name	Degree	Roles	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Melissa Burnham	Ph.D.	Design Team, COE Leadership	F	White
Jafeth Sanchez	Ph.D.	Design Team, EL Faculty, Course Instructor	F	Hispanic
Salwa Zaki	Ed.D.	Design Team, Adjunct Course Instructor	F	Asian
Diane Barone	Ed.D.	Design Team, COE Leadership	F	White
Pati Falk	M.Ed.	Design Team, Internship Lead	F	White
Bill Thornton	Ph.D.	EL Faculty	M	White
Tiffany Young	M.S.	WCS D Program Coordinator, Equity & Diversity	F	Black
Melissa Olsen	M.Ed.	WCS D Principal (Secondary)	F	White
Kelly Humphreys	Ed.D.	WCS D Principal (Elementary)	F	White
Kevin Carroll	M.Ed.	WCS D Principal (Secondary)	M	White
Sue Denning	M.Ed.	WCS D Principal (Secondary)	F	White

**c. Area(s) of Effectiveness Measured**

Improving Recruitment/Selection/Retention of Effective Teachers/Principals

**d. Effectiveness Measure for Each Area, Including Rationale for Chosen Measure**

Course scope and sequence developed (YES): The scope and sequence of Nevada Leads coursework was an essential element to outline when each course would be offered within the 2-year program and to begin conversations on which of the PSEL standards would be covered in each course. The program needed to be developed in order to recruit and select outstanding candidates to it.

**e. Implications for Future Implementation**

Once the scope and sequence of coursework for the program was developed, it could be implemented. At the end of each semester, instructors will discuss the appropriateness of the courses' placement in that particular semester, elements of the courses that went well or need revision, and the like. This will help to ensure that we keep a continuous improvement lens as we begin new cohorts of students.

**Activity 2: Revision of Syllabi**

**a. Overview:** Once the scope and sequence of coursework for Nevada Leads was created, we needed to revise each of the syllabi to align with the PSEL standards, to integrate specific assignments that would be completed within the internship experience each semester, and the like. In order to do this, specific teams were developed for each course. Each team included at least one UNR faculty member and a small group of WCSD principals and central office administrators with interest and expertise in that particular course's content. Teams were provided with syllabus guidelines to ensure compliance with UNR policies. Each team also had access to the PSEL standards to align syllabus content appropriately. During the 2016-2017 grant year, 6 syllabi (in addition to the Internship course) underwent full revision and alignment to the PSEL standards. Revisions of the remaining 5 courses' syllabi (scheduled to be taught in Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2018) are in progress.

**b. Participant Information (who, roles, how many, demographics, etc.)**

Six courses were revised during the 2016-2017 grant year. Teams of mentor principals, district central office administrators, and College of Education faculty volunteered to participate on each course revision team.

**c. Area(s) of Effectiveness Measured**

Improving Recruitment/Selection/Retention of Effective Teachers/Principals

**d. Effectiveness Measure for Each Area, Including Rationale for Chosen Measure**

Course syllabi revised (YES; partially met). The evaluation of this goal was a simple check on whether or not all syllabi were revised. The syllabus revision

process was lengthy; each course revision took several meetings of several hours each. Thus, during the grant year, 6 of the 11 course syllabi were successfully revised. Revision of the remaining syllabi is currently in process.

**e. Implications for Future Implementation**

All first year courses were successfully revised prior to the semester during which they were scheduled to be taught (Spring 2017, Summer 2017, Fall 2017). Now that these courses have been fully revised, the updated syllabi and course content will be used in future cohorts. Naturally, future revisions of the updated syllabi and courses will be made; however, the massive work of aligning to the new PSEL standards is complete. The remaining syllabus revisions (for courses to be taught in Spring 2018, Summer 2018, and Fall 2018) are in process. These revisions will be completed prior to the scheduled semester of implementation.

**Activity 3: Recruitment of Mentor Principals**

**a. Overview**

A key component of the creation of Nevada Leads was the recruitment of outstanding existing principals to serve as mentors to Cohort I students, to co-teach courses with UNR faculty, and to serve on syllabus revision teams. During the fall semester of 2016, 14 potential mentor principals were approached to serve in this role. All agreed to participate. Prior to approaching the principals, the Area Superintendents were alerted and provided a copy of the invitation letter so they would be aware of our plans. Invitation letters were then distributed to each principal in person. A subset of mentor principals served on syllabus revision teams and agreed to co-teach the first courses. In addition, once recruited, our consultant began meeting with the mentors regularly to discuss the role and expectations, and to provide professional learning regarding the mentoring process.

**b. Participant Information (who, roles, how many, demographics, etc.)**

- 14 total mentor principals recruited (10 female)
  - 3 mentor principals from High Schools
  - 4 mentor principals from Middle Schools
  - 7 mentor principals from Elementary Schools

Mentor principals for Cohort I include:

- Denning, Sue
- Carroll, Kevin
- Olsen, Melissa
- Humphreys, Kelly
- Bringhurst, Brandon
- Leonhard, Gina
- Curtis, Jeana
- Meissner, Bruce
- Petersen, Laura

Cunningham, Sara  
Ernst, Joe  
Gavrilles, Heidi  
Waugh, Megan  
Wright, Amy

**c. Area(s) of Effectiveness Measured**

Improving Recruitment/Selection/Retention of Effective Teachers/Principals

**d. Effectiveness Measure for Each Area, Including Rationale for Chosen Measure**

Recruitment of mentor principals for Cohort I was measured by whether or not this occurred and principals agreed to serve in this role (YES). Principals who were contacted unanimously agreed to serve as mentors. In fact, two principals approached our team, asking to be considered for this role.

**e. Implications for Future Implementation**

The mentor principals for Cohort I have agreed to serve in this role throughout the students' program of study (through Fall 2018). That principals viewed the mentorship role as an honor is a good sign for future recruitment of mentors for our next cohorts. We also believe that, once Cohort I students have graduated, the first cohort of mentor principals will agree to serve as mentors for another cohort of students. Given the high degree of coherence that has developed among the mentors, and the feedback we've received on the professional learning that being a mentor has afforded them, we don't anticipate having any problems recruiting additional cohorts of mentors or retaining those who have already been recruited.

**Activity 4: Recruitment of Cohort I**

**a. Overview**

All of the work to create this program would have been for naught without the recruitment of students to experience it. Recruitment of students for Cohort I involved multiple strategies. We sent flyers announcing the program to district principals for distribution, sent multiple announcements via district email blasts, advertised the program on social media, had a local newspaper article highlighting the program's renovation and announcing a call for applications, and hosted several information sessions at schools throughout the district for prospective students to hear more information and get their questions answered. These strategies were highly successful. We had 37 applications from students interested in being in Cohort I; 25 were accepted into the program.

**b. Participant Information (who, roles, how many, demographics, etc.)**

The Nevada Leads leadership team worked on recruitment efforts (Zaki, Burnham, Sanchez), with the help of our program's leadership consultant, the University's media specialists, and the College of Education's marketing coordinator.

Of the 25 admitted students, 19 were female and 4 were students from traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

**c. Area(s) of Effectiveness Measured**

Improving Recruitment/Selection/Retention of Effective Teachers/Principals

**d. Effectiveness Measure for Each Area, Including Rationale for Chosen Measure**

The measure of effectiveness of this activity was the number of students who applied to the program. Although previous efforts to specifically offer the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership to Nevada districts had resulted in only a small number of applications, our recruitment efforts for Nevada Leads led to 37 complete applications by the deadline of December 1, 2016. In fact, the recruitment of applicants was so successful that we needed to implement strict criteria for acceptance, and 12 students who had applied did not get accepted due to our desire to keep the cohort size to a maximum of 25 students. This led to a Cohort of only the strongest applicants, and bolstered the program's nascent reputation as a rigorous, competitive leadership initiative.

**e. Implications for Future Implementation**

Recruitment efforts for the first Cohort were highly successful. These have been replicated for recruitment of Cohort II. Given the program's growing reputation, we anticipate a strong applicant pool for Cohort II. We have also reached out to Carson City School District, and have both mentor principals and potential applicants interested in participating as members of the second Cohort. Given the low racial/ethnic diversity of the first cohort, a goal of Cohort II recruitment is to encourage more diversity in the candidate pool.

**2. Budget Summary**

**a. Narrative Overview of Use of GTL Funds Awarded**

Grant funds were used for several key resources, incentives, and personnel, all assisting with getting the Nevada Leads program up and running and with recruitment of Cohort I. Given that each course is co-taught by an acting or recently retired principal, funding for co-instructors was a necessary component. One of the largest expenditures was the hiring of a professional consultant, who organized the first year of planning and implementation and facilitated the internship course for the spring and summer of 2017. The consultant provided ongoing training and support for the mentor principals, made sure that course revisions were running smoothly and on time, and completed visits to each internship site. Another important budget item was for textbooks. Books for each course were provided to the students, free of charge. The last major budget item was travel to a national professional conference for all students and some faculty. Attending the conference served as an important professional learning opportunity for students, and solidified the cohesion of the cohort.

**b. Brief Description of Expenditure Categories and Description**

Salaries and Benefits: Salary and benefits for co-teaching of each course and additional adjunct faculty needs for Nevada Leads coursework

Purchased Professional Services: Consultant for Nevada Leads

Staff Travel: Travel for Cohort I to a professional conference in Los Angeles, CA (ASCD)

Books and Periodicals: Books purchased for each student in each Nevada Leads course

**c. Awarded Funds vs. Unexpended Funds, Including Narrative of All Unexpended Funds**

Funds awarded: \$113,505.28

Funds expended: \$105,556.70

Funds unexpended: \$7,948.58

- i. Salaries & Benefits: Unexpended funds included \$683.70 in salaries and benefits. The benefits for our co-instructors were less than anticipated, and we spent \$200 less in salaries.
- ii. Purchased Professional Services: Unexpended funds included \$12,024.11 in purchased professional services. Our consultant did not need as many days as we had budgeted. The work was completed in less time than we had originally thought it would take.
- iii. Staff Travel: Unexpended funds included \$4,665.07 in staff travel. Five cohort members were unable to attend the conference in Los Angeles. Some requested to use this travel support for a different (local) conference, but the full budgeted amount per student was not used.
- iv. Books and Periodicals: Books ended up costing much more than anticipated. Although we had budgeted only \$2,500 for books, they actually cost \$12,463. \$9,963 of unexpended funds from other categories were moved (with approval from the state Department of Education) to cover the actual book costs.

*Supporting materials for any sections of this report are available by contacting the report's author, Dr. Melissa Burnham ([mburnham@unr.edu](mailto:mburnham@unr.edu)).*