

Arkansas Tech University

Professional Development Grant Final Report

Navigating a Course to Get the Right People on the Bus for Leadership Preparation Programs

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September 25, 2007

Navigating a Course to Get the Right People on the Bus for Leadership Preparation Programs

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to determine if the Arkansas Tech University Presidential School Leaders Initiative was effective in the recruitment and education of future school leaders. The Presidential School Leaders Initiative was a concept of the Director of the Center for Leadership and Learning (CLL) presented to the Dean of the School of Education and University President as a program to encourage teachers who show leadership characteristics in their schools to be tapped by their superintendent to explore a degree program for school leadership. The 50% tuition reduction is provided as an incentive to the selected students to explore and consider school leadership positions. A concern of the director of the CLL was the potential misuse of the initiative by individuals who enroll and take six hours for the purpose of advancing on the salary scale or for teacher license renewal.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study were:

1. Does school district superintendents' identification of future school leaders add to the pool of candidates for future school leadership roles?
2. Does providing a 50% reduction in the first six (6) hours of tuition encourage graduate students to begin and complete the program of study?
3. Does graduate students' degree of commitment to school leadership vary at different points in their program of study?
4. Do graduate students who attain a leadership degree have a willingness to move to available leadership positions in other districts?

Since the fall semester of 2005, forty-five students have been recommended for the ATU Presidential School Leadership Initiative. Of the forty-five recommended and admitted, two students withdrew from the program of study. One reported financial issues and one reported personal problems prohibiting continuation. The latter has inquired about resuming the program of study in the fall semester of 2007. A survey instrument was administered in June 2007 to the 43 identified ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative students who are enrolled, in good standing and on track for degree completion. The survey was constructed collaboratively by the three professors who teach in the degree programs of the CLL.

Findings

Forty-one (41) of the surveys were completed and returned. Of those surveyed, 27% were male and 73% were female. Forty-four percent were in the age range of 25 to 35 years, forty-four percent were in the age range of 35 to 45 years and 8% were in the fifty-five year plus category.

The findings of the study delineated by research questions are:

1. Does school district superintendents' identification of future school leaders add to the pool of candidates for future school leadership roles?

Ninety percent of those surveyed indicated after completing their degree, their intention is to actively pursue a school leadership position. Eleven respondents had already assumed school leadership positions.

2. Does providing a 50% reduction in the first six (6) hours of tuition encourage graduate students to begin and complete the program of study?

Ninety-five percent of those surveyed indicated they were on track and intended to complete their degree as scheduled.

3. Does graduate students' degree of commitment to school leadership vary at different points in their program of study?

The mean of the students surveyed increased from 3.70 (*desire to be a school leader prior to beginning the degree program*) to 4.64 (*after completion of 12 hours of course work*).

4. Do graduate students who attain a leadership degree have a willingness to move to available leadership positions in other districts?

Fifty-six percent indicated after completing their degree they would be mobile in their search for a leadership position; thirty-four percent indicated they would not be mobile in their search; ten percent did not respond to this question.

Other survey data indicated that principals were more likely to interact (77.7%) with the leadership candidates than the recommending superintendents (58%) about their role as a future school leader.

Four of the fourteen MTLL program of study students surveyed indicated their desire to be a school leader prior to beginning the program of study was the same or *less* after the completion of six to twelve graduate hours. This result was in direct contrast to the majority of the surveyed students and prompted further inquiry. An individual interview with each of these students revealed that they all considered themselves to be growing professionally through their coursework in the MTLL program. They felt their new learning will improve their ability as a classroom teacher. At the present time, they are not interested in pursuing a formal leadership role. One student responded with:

While I fully intend to be a school leader, I have no intentions of pursuing a formal

leadership position at this time. Informal teacher leadership can powerfully impact the leadership capacity of an organization. In fact, Donaldson discusses the role of the teacher leader in building and sustaining relationships, developing shared vision, and mobilizing for action-in-common. As a teacher leader, I realize that I can make a positive difference for students and teachers, with or without a formal title or position. (personal communication, July 19, 2007)

Another student stated “I will continue working as an informal leader in my building and doing what is best for kids.” All four indicated that they may want a formal leadership position at some point in the future. At this time, they are focused on continuing to improve their teaching and learning practices, using their new learning in their classroom to make a positive difference for the students they teach.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study indicate: (a) students who are recommended for a program of study through this initiative increase their desire for a school leadership position as they progress through the program of study; (b) a students’ principal has more involvement in the students leadership pursuit than the recommending superintendent; (c) students enrolled through this initiative stay on course for their program of study; and (d) a little more than half of those pursuing a leadership position are willing to be mobile in pursuing a leadership position. In addition, professors teaching the classes in the leadership program of study indicated, when given the list of the candidates who had been admitted as part of this initiative, they were better students than those who self-selected to enter a leadership program.

Recommendations

The recommendation of the professors conducting this study are to: a) do a follow-up study upon degree completion to track the leadership positions pursued; b) do a follow-up study of any out-of-district move to a leadership position made by the candidates responding in this study; c) do a follow-up study to determine how many of these students become educational leaders in their state; d) do a follow-up study to see if these students' schools are meeting state standards; and e) determine how many of the master level graduates return to pursue the value-added Educational Specialist degree to attain a leadership position at the district level. In addition, a comparison study of graduate students who self-select to enter the CLL leadership programs and are not part of the ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative is recommended.

The data indicates the initiative was not misused by individuals to obtain course hours for the sole purpose of moving up on a salary scale or for teacher licensure renewal. The overall continuation of this initiative would be recommended in building a candidate base of future school leaders.

For additional information, see attached National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) program descriptor, paper and accompanying PowerPoint presentation presented at the NCPEA conference in Chicago.

Welcome to
CHICAGO

**61st Annual NCPEA
Summer Conference**
July 31 - August 3, 2007

GENERAL SESSIONS & BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session #7 continued

Crystal Ballroom – Roundtables

- *Utilizing Blackboard Assessment Tools and Evidence-Based Research to Design Online Group Leadership Policy: The Rural District Model*, Janell Drone-Sam Houston State University
- *Taking School Business Management from the Textbook and Classroom to the District Office*, Kent F. Johansen-Western Illinois University
- *Educational Administrators: Responding to the Testing Craze*, Vernon G. Smith-Indiana University, Northwest

- *Transforming the Work of School Leadership*, Timothy B. Berkey-University of Houston, Victoria
- *Making the Masters Research Course Relevant for Real School Leaders*, Rebecca Bustamante & Julie P. Combs-Sam Houston State University

General Session #2: 4:00-4:45 (Crystal Ballroom) NCEA Update/Ice Cream Social

Thursday, August 2, 2007

General Session #3: 8:00–9:00 (Crystal Ballroom)

Corwin Lecture-Dr. Randall Lindsey, *Culturally Proficient Professoriate*

Session #8: 9:10-9:50

Parlor A

- *Instructional Technology and Leadership: Critical Concepts for Future Educational Leaders*, Doreen Gosmire-University of Nebraska, Lincoln & Marilyn Grady-University of South Dakota
- *Innovations in On-Line Teaching: Creating the Ultimate Learning Community*, Robert L. Marshall-Western Illinois University

Parlor B

- *Navigating a Course to Get the Right People on the Bus for Leadership Preparation*, Mary B. Gunter, Kerry Roberts, & Karen Endel-Arkansas Tech University
- *Preparing Educational Administrators to Encourage Teacher Leaders*, Marc Shelton-George Fox University

Parlor C

- *Morse v. Frederick: Legal Issues and Implications for Administrators of the Supreme Court's Latest Foray into Students' First Amendment Rights*, Justin M. Bathon & Martha M. McCarthy – Indiana University
- *Assessing the Nature of School Law in Educational Leadership Compared to the Preparation School Leaders Received: A National Study*, Vivian Hopp Gordon-Loyola University Chicago

Parlor D

- *Exploring Metaphors in Educational Leadership Teams*, Patricia Ann Marcellino-Adelphi University
- *Leading Under the Sigmoid Curve: The Challenges of Leading School Improvement*, Ronald A. Lindahl & Robert Beech-Alabama State University

Parlor E

- *Creating an Induction Model for School Administrators: Collaborative Efforts to Build Ongoing Support Structures for School Leaders within the University's Regional Network*, Vernon Farrington, Hal Holloman, Marjorie Ringler, William Rouse, Lee Grier, & Bill Grobe-East Carolina University

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Navigating a Course to Get the Right People on the Bus for Leadership Preparation Programs

Introduction

This paper describes a study of graduate students admitted to a master degree or educational specialist degree program through the Arkansas Tech University (ATU) Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative. The ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative provides an opportunity for superintendents, as employing authorities, to identify and recommend those they perceive to have the leadership skills and dispositions for an advanced degree program through the Center for Leadership and Learning. If the recommended candidates meet graduate school admission requirements they are awarded a 50% reduction in tuition for the first six hours of their course work.

To support the concept of getting the right people on the bus, the nomination form asks superintendents to indicate leadership roles the nominees have in the district. In addition, they were asked to list characteristics that would indicate a nominee's ability to be successful in an advanced leadership degree program.

Center for Leadership and Learning (CLL)

The mission of the CLL is to prepare, through a performance-based system, school leadership teams (teachers, administrators and counselors) with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to work collaboratively to develop a professional learning community focused on student success (revised, November 2006). CLL teaching practices throughout all programs of study align with current research indicating the importance of building relationships and working collaboratively in professional learning teams focused on positive change and enhanced student learning (Donaldson, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2007; Reeves, 2005). Established in

2000, the CLL was designed to prepare leaders at all levels. The recruitment initiative is open to degree programs preparing future school principals, curriculum administrators and district superintendents.

The Presidential School Leaders Initiative was a concept of the Director of the Center for Leadership and Learning (CLL) presented to the Dean of the School of Education and University President as a program to encourage teachers who show leadership characteristics in their schools to be tapped by their superintendent to explore a degree program for school leadership (See Appendix B for brochure). The 50% tuition reduction is provided as an incentive to the selected students to explore and consider school leadership positions. A concern of the director of the CLL was the potential misuse of the initiative by individuals who enroll and take six hours for the purpose of advancing on the salary scale or for teacher license renewal.

Need

Chapman (2005) indicates that recruiting educational leaders and the process of leadership learning are continuous and progressive (p. 19). “In the past, education systems have been heavily reliant on a process of self selection in the identification of future leaders. Now a more systematic and collaborative approach, involving employing authorities, schools, universities, leadership centers, and individuals is required” (Chapman, 2005, p. 21). Providing a financial incentive through the reduction in tuition cost for the first six (6) hours of coursework encourages quality graduate students to enroll at Arkansas Tech University. A study completed at the University of Colorado (2004) indicates that one of the barriers to increasing the number and quality of graduate students is a lack of financial support that is competitive.

Fullan (2007) states, “Nothing is more central to reform than the selection and

development of teachers and administrators” (p.17). Providing a structure to identify and recruit graduate leadership students perceived to be the *right people* by current practitioners in the field supports the graduate students’ initial and continued perception of their personal success as a school leader. Jim Collins study in *Good to Great* (2001) found that executives who ignited effective transformations from good to great in the business community “did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get people to take it there....they got the right people on the bus and then figured out where to drive it” (p. 41). The ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative was designed to allow superintendents to build the leadership capacity within their district through their recruitment efforts.

Little research is found concerning career mobility among graduate leadership students. Additional research is needed in the study of mobility of candidates for leadership positions.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study were:

1. Does school district superintendents’ identification of future school leaders add to the pool of candidates for future school leadership roles?
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3. Does graduate students’ degree of commitment to school leadership vary at different points in their program of study?
4. Do graduate students who attain a leadership degree have a willingness to move to available leadership positions in other districts?

Since the fall semester of 2005, forty-five students have been recommended for the ATU

Presidential School Leadership Initiative. Of the forty-five recommended and admitted, two students withdrew from the program of study. One reported financial issues and one reported personal problems prohibiting continuation. The latter has inquired about resuming the program of study in the fall semester of 2007. A survey instrument (see Appendix A) was administered in June 2007 to the 43 identified ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative students who are enrolled, in good standing and on track for degree completion. The survey was constructed collaboratively by the three professors who teach in the degree programs of the CLL.

Findings

Forty-one (41) of the surveys were completed and returned. Of those surveyed, 27% were male and 73% were female. Forty-four percent were in the age range of 25 to 35 years, forty-four percent were in the age range of 35 to 45 years and 8% were in the fifty-five year plus category.

The findings of the study delineated by research questions are:

1. Does school district superintendents' identification of future school leaders add to the pool of candidates for future school leadership roles?

Ninety percent of those surveyed indicated after completing their degree, their intention is to actively pursue a school leadership position. Eleven respondents had already assumed school leadership positions (Appendix A, Table 4).

2. Does providing a 50% reduction in the first six (6) hours of tuition encourage graduate students to begin and complete the program of study?

Ninety-five percent of those surveyed indicated they were on track and intended to complete their degree as scheduled (Appendix A, Table 4).

3. Does graduate students' degree of commitment to school leadership vary at different

points in their program of study?

The mean of the students surveyed increased from 3.70 (*desire to be a school leader prior to beginning the degree program*) to 4.64 (*after completion of 12 hours of course work*) (Appendix A, Table 5).

4. Do graduate students who attain a leadership degree have a willingness to move to available leadership positions in other districts?

Fifty-six percent indicated after completing their degree they would be mobile in their search for a leadership position; thirty-four percent indicated they would not be mobile in their search; ten percent did not respond to this question (Appendix A, Table 4).

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Four of the fourteen MTLL program of study students surveyed indicated their desire to be a school leader prior to beginning the program of study was the same or *less* after the completion of six to twelve graduate hours. This result was in direct contrast to the majority of the surveyed students and prompted further inquiry. An individual interview with each of these students revealed that they all considered themselves to be growing professionally through their coursework in the MTLL program. They felt their new learning will improve their ability as a classroom teacher. At the present time, they are not interested in pursuing a formal leadership role. One student responded with:

While I fully intend to be a school leader, I have no intentions of pursuing a formal

leadership position at this time. Informal teacher leadership can powerfully impact the leadership capacity of an organization. In fact, Donaldson discusses the role of the teacher leader in building and sustaining relationships, developing shared vision, and mobilizing for action-in-common. As a teacher leader, I realize that I can make a positive difference for students and teachers, with or without a formal title or position. (personal communication, July 19, 2007)

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Summary of Findings

The findings of the study indicate: (a) students who are recommended for a program of study through this initiative increase their desire for a school leadership position as they progress through the program of study; (b) a students’ principal has more involvement in the students leadership pursuit than the recommending superintendent; (c) students enrolled through this initiative stay on course for their program of study; and (d) a little more than half of those pursuing a leadership position are willing to be mobile in pursuing a leadership position. In addition, professors teaching the classes in the leadership program of study indicated, when given the list of the candidates who had been admitted as part of this initiative, they were better students than those who self-selected to enter a leadership program.

Recommendations

The recommendation of the professors conducting this study are to: a) do a follow-up study upon degree completion to track the leadership positions pursued; b) do a follow-up study of any out-of-district move to a leadership position made by the candidates responding in this study; c) do a follow-up study to determine how many of these students become educational leaders in their state; d) do a follow-up study to see if these students' schools are meeting state standards; and e) determine how many of the master level graduates return to pursue the value-added Educational Specialist degree to attain a leadership position at the district level. In addition, a comparison study of graduate students who self-select to enter the CLL leadership programs and are not part of the ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative is recommended.

The data indicates the initiative was not misused by individuals to obtain course hours for the sole purpose of moving up on a salary scale or for teacher licensure renewal. The overall continuation of this initiative would be recommended in building a candidate base of future school leaders.

References

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Appendices

Appendix A

ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative Survey Instrument Data

Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative Survey Instrument Data

Table 1.

Current Position

Current Position	Number n = 41
Superintendent	1
Assistant Superintendent	0
Principal	5
Assistant Principal	4
Curriculum Administrator/Specialist	1
Teacher	26
Other	4

Table 2.

Degree Program of Study

Degree Program	Number n = 41	Percentage
MTLL (Master of Education in Teaching, Learning and Leadership)	14	34 %
EDLD (Educational Leadership)	18	44 %
EDS (Educational Specialist)	9	22 %

Table 3.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Gender		Age	
Male	27 %	25 – 35	44 %
Female	73%	36 – 45	44 %
		46 – 55+	12 %

Table 4.

Student career goals

Information	Yes and No
1. Before enrollment or during my program of study, I have taken a leadership position.	Yes = 52.5 % No = 47.5 %
2. I am on track and intend to complete my degree as scheduled.	Yes = 95 % No = 5 %
3. After completing my degree, my intention is to actively pursue a school leadership position	Yes = 90 % No = 10 %
4. After completing my degree, I will be mobile in my search for a leadership position.	Yes = 56 % No = 34 % No answer = 10 %

Table 5.

Student desire to become a school leader

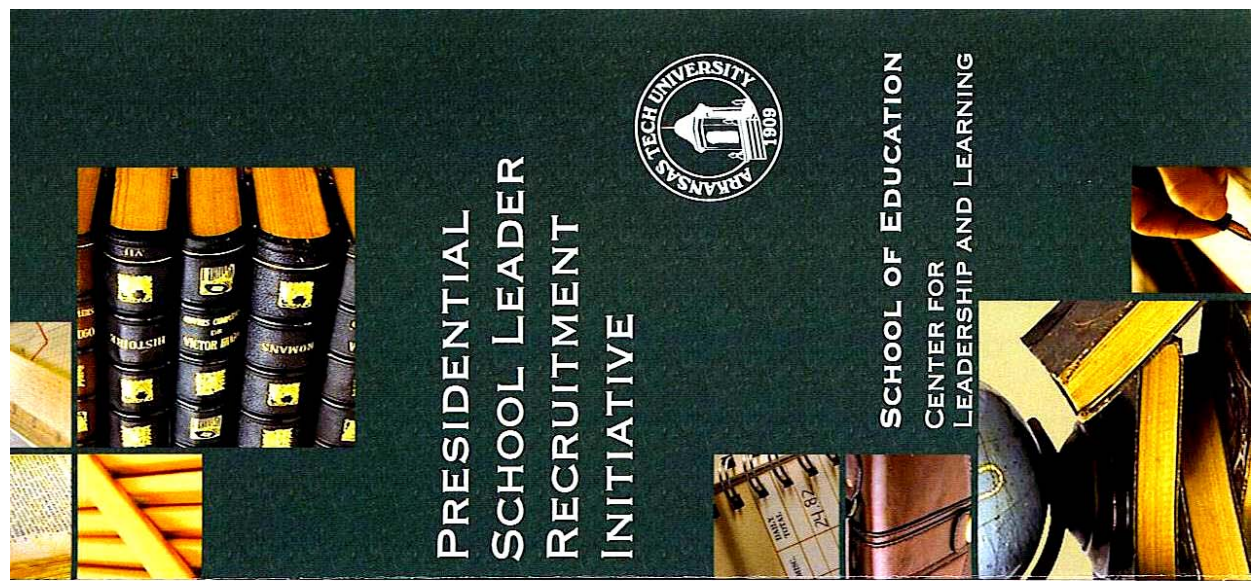
Degree of <i>desire</i> to become a School Leader	1 - Low desire	2 - Less than Medium desire	3 - Medium desire	4 - Less than high desire	5 - High desire	Mean	n=41
1. Prior to beginning the degree program	5 %	7 %	32 %	24 %	32 %	3.70	
2. After completion of 6 hours of course work			10 %	46 %	44 %	4.34	
3. If applicable, after completion of 12 hours of course work			3 %	25 %	72 %	4.64	

Table 6
Encouragement to Become a School Leader

Situation	At least once prior to starting my degree program	Several (1 to 2) times after beginning the program	On a regular basis	Not at all
1. I have talked to my superintendent about my role as a future school leader	30 %	35 %	23 %	12 %
2. My superintendent has initiated contact with me about my role as a future school leader	15 %	32.5 %	10 %	42.5 %
3. I have talked to my principal about my role as a future school leader	7.5 %	20 %	57.5 %	15 %
4. My principal has initiated contact with me about my role as a future school leader	18 %	16 %	37 %	29 %

Appendix B

Presidential School Leader Recruitment Initiative Brochure

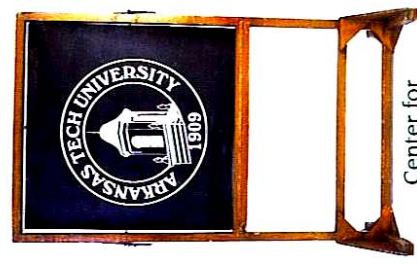


**PRESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL LEADER
RECRUITMENT
INITIATIVE**



**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
CENTER FOR
LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING**

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Dr. Robert C. Brown Requests Your Input



Brown

Through the Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative, Dr. Brown's focus is to assist in recruiting future school leaders for Arkansas public schools. This is your chance to share that focus.

Arkansas Tech University has nationally recognized programs for school leader preparation through the Center for Leadership and Learning (CLL) in the School of Education. The leadership programs prepare individuals for leadership roles as school principals, curriculum administrators, school counselors and district superintendents. According to Dr. Glenn Sheets, dean of the School of Education, "The Center for Leadership and Learning received national recognition at the exemplary level during the recent NCATE review."

Through the Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative, students who are nominated by their school district superintendent and meet the CLL entrance requirements will receive a 50 percent reduction in tuition rates for the first six (6) hours of the degree

program of study. Public schools are invited to join Dr. Brown to identify, recruit and encourage future school leaders through this opportunity.

The Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative incentive is designed to assist individuals to explore the various venues for school leadership, while earning six (6) graduate hours toward an advanced degree.

Gunter



According to Dr. Mary B. Gunter, director, the Center for Leadership and Learning, "The need for school leaders in Arkansas will emerge as a priority issue, as current practicing administrators move into retirement." The CLL provides programs that focus on the leadership needed in today's schools to meet the public demand for strong teaching and learning accountability.

The CLL attracts students from a large radius within the state, reaching to the far north and far south borders of Arkansas. The CLL offers leadership programs on the Tech Russellville and Ozark campuses, as well as distance learning and web-based classes.

PRESIDENTIAL SCHOOL LEADER NOMINATION FORM ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

To submit a nomination, please complete the following:

Name of Nominee: _____
 Current Position: _____
 District: _____
 School: _____
 Home Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 E-Mail Address: _____

Please consider this nominee for the following program:

- M.T.L.L.
 Master of Education, Teaching, Learning & Leadership
 Curriculum Administrator, Curriculum Director/Coordinator
- E.D.L.D.
 Master of Education, Educational Leadership
 Building Level Administrator
- E.D.S.
 Educational Specialist, Educational Leadership
 District Level Administrator

List leadership experience of nominee
 (i.e. department chair, ACSIP chair, lead teacher).*

Briefly indicate leadership characteristics and/or dispositions this nominee demonstrates and will bring to a future school leadership role.*

If selected for the Tech Presidential School Leaders Initiative, I will encourage and support the nominee throughout his/her program of study.

Superintendent Signature _____ Date _____

School District _____

Please return to Dr. Mary B. Gunter





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 Arkansas Tech University
 Russellville, Arkansas

Karen Endel, ED.S., NBCT
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Kerry Roberts, Ph.D.
 Assistant Professor
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The mission of the Center for Leadership and Learning is to prepare, through a performance-based system, school leadership teams, (teachers, administrators and counselors) with knowledge, skills and dispositions to work collaboratively to develop a professional learning community focused on student success.

ATU Presidential School Leaders Recruitment Initiative

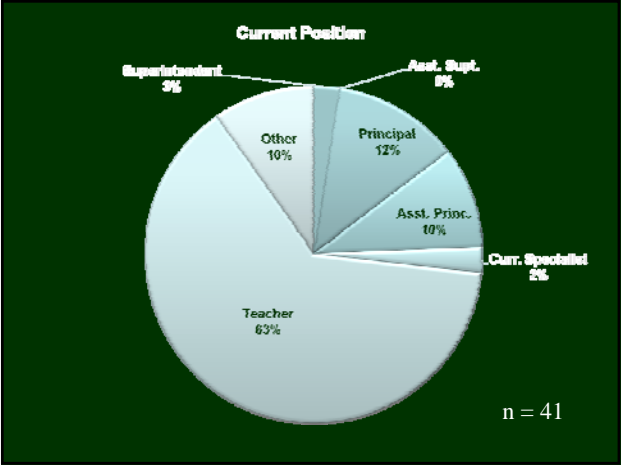
	<p>Spring 2008 Fall 2005 Candidates Graduate</p> <p>Summer 2007 16 Nominees Accepted</p> <p>Spring 2007 14 Nominees Accepted</p> <p>Fall 2006 12 Nominees Accepted; <i>(1 Fall 2005 Candidate Dropped)</i></p> <p>Summer 2006 1 Nominee Accepted</p> <p>Spring 2006 6 Nominees Accepted; <i>(1 Fall 2005 Candidate Dropped)</i></p> <p>Fall 2005 11 Nominees Accepted</p>
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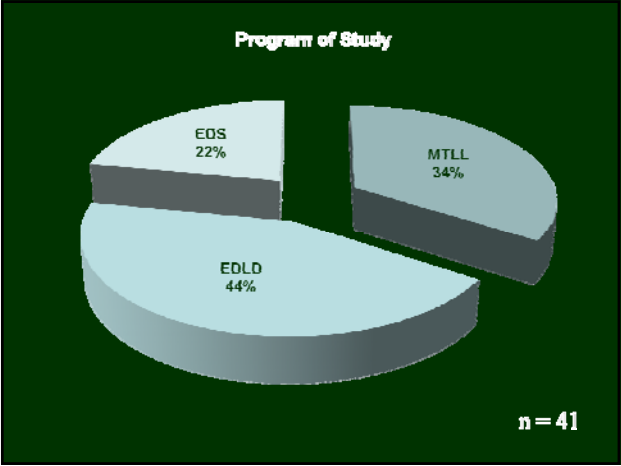


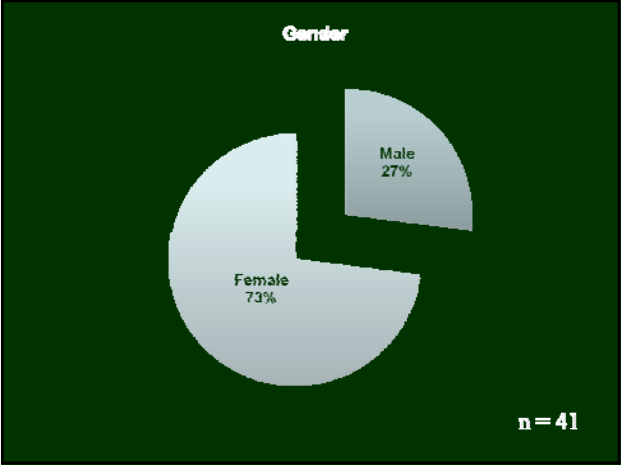
The screenshot shows the website for the Center for Leadership and Learning at Arkansas Tech University. The page features a navigation menu on the left with links for Director Message, Announcements, Questions, Faculty Information, Programs, Educational Links, Courses, and Students. The main content area includes a header with the center's name and logo, a photograph of a building, and text describing the center's mission and current initiatives, such as the ELL Program's National Recruitment. A sidebar on the right contains links for Faculty and Staff, and a footer with contact information.

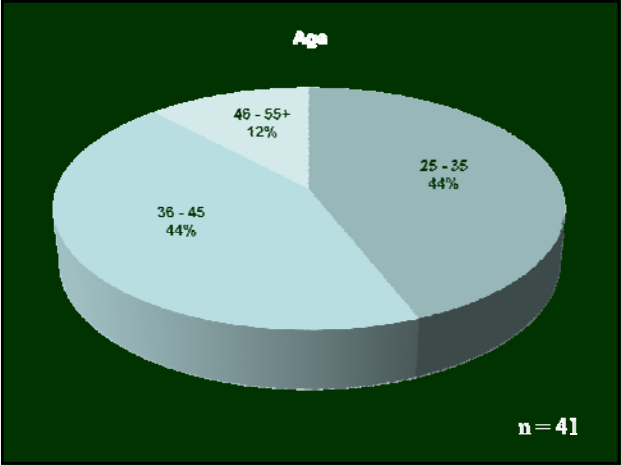


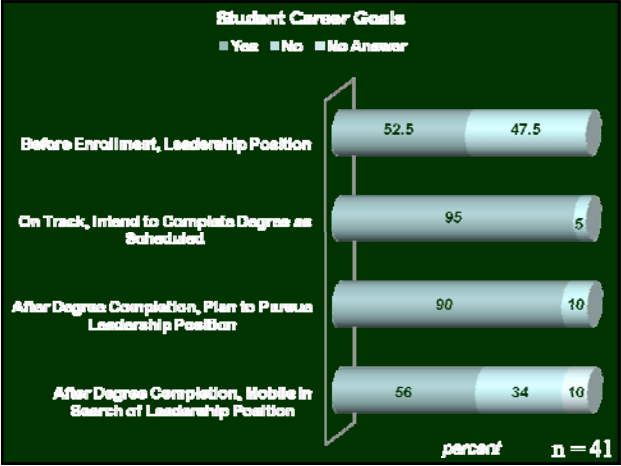
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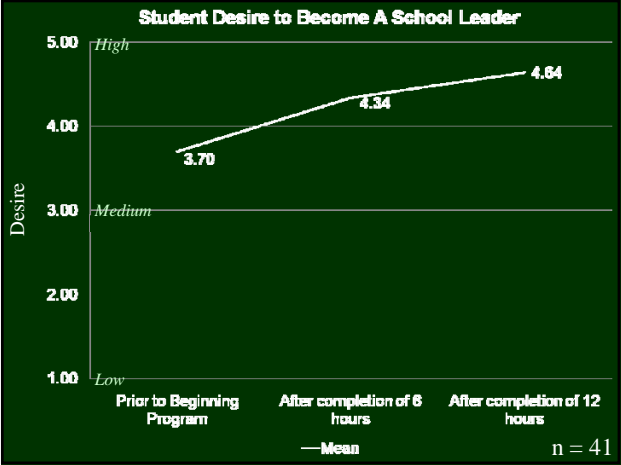




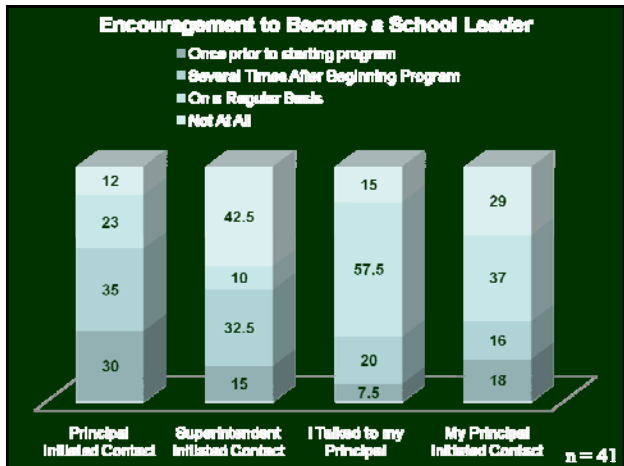








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For More Information

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