

The logo for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at CSUN, featuring the letters 'CTL' in a large, white, serif font on a black background.The text 'ON THE CUTTING EDGE' in a white, serif font, centered within a black rectangular box.

Creating School Leaders Through Strong Preparation Programs by Elyse Sullivan, Ed.D.

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Masters of School Administration and Administrative Credential Programs strive to prepare prospective school leaders as school site administrators. Is there a link between the quality of a university academic preparation program and the subsequent effective practice of school and district leaders? The relevance of academic course work has been a question posed by district leadership for many years as they look to hire site administrators. Common complaints are that course work is often not linked to the current realities of daily practice, can sometimes lack rigor, and the information may be delivered by someone who has limited or no practical experience in the work in the field. Research has shown that there is a strong link between successful school leaders and the subsequent success of student achievement and schools so it is critical that our leaders are well-prepared. A study done by the Wallace Foundation (2016), which commissioned four separate reports all dealing with university-based preparation programs for school and district leaders, determined that there was a need to do the following:

- Develop strong partnerships between the university and school district
- Review the course of study to ensure that it reflects the real world of the principal
- Improve university programs to reflect effective practice of school leaders
- Provide for strong clinical opportunities with district mentors/coaches
- Provide faculty members at the university level who have school leadership experience.

As part of the Educational Leadership Program (ELPS) at CSUN, we are addressing these components. In fact, each student is asked to complete a survey that reflects the California State Standards for School Leaders three times during the administrative Masters and credential programs. The purpose of the survey is to determine whether our CSUN students:

- Are receiving academic links to day to day practice
- Have the opportunity to see what successful leadership looks/feels like
- Are able to define leadership as part of their day-to-day practice
- Have multiple opportunities for decision making tasks
- Have opportunities to effectively practice the knowledge acquired from course work in day-to-day practice while receiving coaching and feedback
- Believe the content of the university course work is relevant and pertinent to the job skill set
- Are provided the tools for successful implementation of job requirements.

The CSUN Administrative Masters/Credential program faculty work as a team to provide:

- Relevant course work that supports the learning and application to day-to-day practice
- Inclusion of role playing, simulations, and current case studies
- Opportunities during the program to practice and demonstrate initiative, innovation, and risk taking prior to the first administrative assignment
- Follow-up assignment of a coach/mentor to provide direct observation and feedback
- Dialogue/work with current district leadership to develop an ongoing coaching model.

The CSUN Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) faculty are working to develop programs that enhance the coaching model, provide students with feedback for growth, and provide a stronger connection between CSUN, school districts, and prospective school leaders in training.

Dr. Elyse Sullivan is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies in the Michael D. Eisner College of Education at CSUN. Her coursework includes instruction in the foundations and philosophies of curriculum and instructional supervision, principles of professional development for staff members, and the role of various school personnel in improving teaching and learning.

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REFERENCE

The Wallace Foundation. (2016). *Improving university principal preparation programs: Five themes from the field*. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Improving-University-Principal-Preparation-Programs.aspx>

The Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of ELPS is to prepare and inspire educational leaders, to maximize student learning and access, link theory to best practice, support collaborative partnerships, and promote culturally responsive leadership in a diverse environment. The program's scholar-practitioners will lead through systemic reform, collaboration, action research, and cultural proficiency. The ELPS Doctoral Program seeks to create a network of school and college administrators fully prepared to effect profound change in teaching and learning that leads to improved student achievement. The Master's/Preliminary Administrative Credential prepares current teachers and certificated personnel in the areas of educational and instructional leadership with a focus on the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to be successful 21st century school leaders. The Tier II Credential* is designed for current school administrators who need to complete Tier II requirements in order to obtain a Professional Administrative Services Credential.

**The Educational Leadership and Policy Studies is currently planning to offer the Professional Administrative Services Credential Tier II program beginning AY 2018-2019.*

Want to Learn More?

ONLINE RESOURCES

Admission Requirements & Guidelines

<http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/educational-leadership-policy-studies>

Academic Programs & Cohorts

<http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/doctoral-program/academic-programs>

Student Resources

<http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/doctoral-program/students>

For more information, please contact department chair Dr. Jody Dunlap at jody.dunlap@csun.edu

Follow up with the author Dr. Elyse Sullivan at elyse.sullivan@csun.edu

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