

21 September, 2023

To: Faculty Senate, SEC, Graduate Council and other concerned parties

From: DODC affiliated faculty, Department of Management Faculty, Schmidthorst College of Business Leadership

Re: Proposed degree designation change of EdD in Leadership Studies to PhD in Leadership Studies

Faculty members affiliated with the Doctorate in Organization Development and Change (D.ODC) program have expressed concerns regarding the recent proposal to change the Ed.D. in Leadership Studies to a Ph.D. Our concerns stem from a lack of prior consultation and awareness of substantial changes to the program's scope and target student population until just before the last faculty senate meeting on September 11, 2023. In the past ten days, we have diligently examined the implications of these changes with assistance from Chris Willis, who made himself available on multiple occasions to engage in the conversation.

The primary issue is the substantial overlap and duplication that would exist between the programs. This overlap has intensified as the Ed.D. program transitions to a blended/hybrid model with remote courses, a broadened target population, significantly expanding its nationwide reach. Additionally, the proposed change in degree designation from Ed.D. to Ph.D., dropping "Education" from the designation, broadens the program's scope beyond education.

This shift to a Ph.D. program and its new delivery format will create increased competition between our programs, potentially drawing students away from the D.ODC program. It's worth noting that the research requirements between the D.ODC and the Ed.D. (Ph.D. proposal) are essentially the same (both require five research courses), with D.ODC dissertations already published or submitted in quality peer-reviewed journals.

Furthermore, the College of Education's Ed.D. to Ph.D. program's reduced travel requirements, more recognizable degree designation, and tuition discounts make it a competitive choice compared to the D.ODC program. The D.ODC program, in contrast, is not provided similar supports from the university as it lacks tuition discounts, and also includes additional executive course fees, which fund books, materials, speakers, marketing, staffing, various non-traditional student support services, and the international course.

We believe the increasing similarity in positioning between these programs would confuse prospective students, potentially jeopardizing the D.ODC program. To mitigate this, we recommend keeping the word "Education" in the name change, perhaps "Ph.D. in Educational Leadership Studies," and focus the descriptions of both degrees to create clear market segmentation. As a result, the two programs could coexist and support each other while maintaining their unique identities and thought leadership.

Without such adjustments, the faculty associated with the D.ODC program strongly oppose the Ed.D. degree designation/title change to a Ph.D. in Leadership Studies due to concerns about scope overlap, direct enrollment competition, and the DODC program's viability.

DODC Affiliated Faculty