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Written Statement of Purpose
SDSU Doctorate of Education

I love learning. I have had the motto of being a “jack of all trades and a master of none.” In contrast now, I am interested in becoming a master of some. I am interested in furthering my education because I want to be a stronger faculty member. I want to be more knowledgeable about the community college system. I believe that if you understand the process and culture of your work, you can use that understanding in making changes and improving the system. In the next few pages, I intend to talk about my purpose for applying, my research interests, challenges in community college leadership, my strengths and weaknesses, and why I believe the SDSU Ed.D. program is for me.

As I have mentioned, I want to be a better faculty member. How I intend to do so is through continuing my work in the classroom and through increased faculty involvement campus wide. I teach college success skills which includes study skills and personal development. I believe that taking the opportunity to become a student again will strengthen me as an instructor. Becoming a student will allow me to practice what I preach and to remember what being a student is like. The reminder of what it is like to be a student will make me a stronger instructor.

As for campus wide involvement, one of the greatest opportunities at Palomar College is with the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) that Palomar will implement this fall 2009. I have always been involved with and participated in student success activities such as college nights, hosting the High School Counselors’ Conferences, our Early Acceptance Program for incoming

freshmen, and teaching college success courses. Getting involved with the BSI at Palomar College is another opportunity for me to participate in student success.

My research interests lie within student success. There is a great deal of research on the importance of a student's first year experience. At Palomar College I noticed that we focus on the students' experiences before arriving at Palomar and on their first impressions. What about during their second semester? What happens from their second to their third semester? What is needed and what can be improved upon? Another area I am considering focusing my research upon is the effect of the BSI on the students. What are the retention rates before and after the BSI? The Doctoral program would give me the perfect opportunity to study this over the span of three years. I am also considering research on the importance of high school and community college connections, not only in orientation, but also in English and math. Another possible topic would be the second year experience because that is not widely researched. Overall, I am most interested in conducting pre and post research on the BSI at Palomar College because of its importance to the college.

Typical challenges in community college leadership include lack of qualified leadership in the future and the full-time/part-time ratio of faculty. Challenges that I am interested in reversing include resistance to change in the implementation of new programs and lack of faculty buy-in of new ideas especially from less senior faculty. I see some of these challenges currently occurring in the implementation of the BSI at Palomar. I believe that I can have a positive affect on these challenges, especially after completing the Doctoral program.

This is where my strengths come in handy. According to the StrengthsFinder 2.0 assessment, my top 5 strengths are connectedness, learner, empathy, developer and positivity. I

see my positivity as a huge asset. My positivity helps me tackle challenges and helps me relate to people and events. I believe that I bring an attitude that people can relate to and feel comfortable with. An added strength that I have is my ability to be reflective and analytical. I have a mathematical mind as reflected in my GRE scores. My analytical strength allows me to think critically and requires me to have organization and balance in my mind, body and spirit. This need for organization and balance is reinforced by my two children who require structure and have no sense of time.

But many times, a person's strength can be a weakness. Some areas of improvement in preparation for my goals include continual development of my strengths and teaching methods, and wisdom in taking ideas to the next level and incorporating them smoothly and successfully. My reflection and analytical strengths can lead to lack of action or hesitation for perfection. But for me, it all comes back to balance. My awareness of who I am and where I am allows me to push myself to lean into my discomfort for growth. And while reflection and analysis can be both a weakness and a strength for me, my positivity is always a strength.

The Doctorate of Education program is appropriate for me not only because of my strengths, but also because I am familiar with cohorts, I teach online and face-to-face, and because I understand that humans are social learners. Being a graduate of the Community Based Block program, I am extremely familiar with being a member of a cohort. I am aware of group dynamics and how it can affect learning. I am also aware of how I contribute to those dynamics and believe I can be a positive influence on others' education in another cohort based program. Secondly, I teach online and face-to-face. Not only am I familiar with Blackboard, but I also understand what is expected and what is different between the two methods of delivery. Many believe that students in online courses are not connected. Those who believe the previous

statement are not aware of the amount of collaboration and communication that can take place in an online course. Having an online component to the Doctoral program is not only convenient, but also smart and beneficial, especially for reflective learners like me. And lastly, former President Woodrow Wilson stated, "I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow." By being interdependent, we can accomplish more than we could by working alone. And because this program is based on interdependence, I believe that I will be successful in this setting.