

Reflection of Learning Prior to Advancement to Candidacy

My Learning as it Relates to the Program Learning Outcomes

The learning I have done in this doctoral program has been academically informative, practical for my career, and personally eye opening. The most valuable learning has been about me. The program has challenged me to grow in areas I believed I did not have more to learn. The greatest lesson has been the lesson about relationships with those around me at home, at work, and with myself. This lesson began with entering into the program with colleagues, knowing that applying with friends would prevent me from feeling the self-doubt and discontinuing the application process. The fact that we decided to attempt a doctoral program together despite all the stresses and responsibilities we already had made the process easier to work through knowing that I was not alone in my experience and ambivalence.

The next lesson in relationships came through the *Rethinking Leadership* course. Through this course, I realized that I needed to challenge the superficiality of my relationships at work. After taking the course on *Rethinking Leadership* with Dr. McFarlane and Dr. Pumpian, I recognized that I needed to go through the work of developing more intimate relationships with my coworkers. I discovered that the development of these relationships is vital to being able to accomplish more at work because of the increased communication, understanding and interpersonal relationship. In addition, this means recognizing my coworkers' strengths and accepting them for who they are rather than focusing on their weaknesses.

My lessons in relationships have continued through the program through the support of my cohort and the bonds we formed, through experiencing frustration during group work and individually and noticing that in a group, the frustrations were easier to handle, and through the

understanding that a good leader needs to have good relationship building skills as exemplified by a professor who always knew when I had something to say and invited me to present my opinion. These lessons in relationship addressed the learning outcomes of communication (#4), collaboration (#5), and professionalism (#7).

The lessons in relationships were reinforced in the *External and Community Partnerships* course and *Leadership and Educational Change* course by Dr. Jeffcoat. The *External and Community Partnerships* course opened my eyes up to the possibilities of partnerships and grant writing. Before the program, I understood that grant writing was an asset, but never thought that I would consider writing a grant. Now, I am researching grants for our Transfer Center for additional funding especially in the current economic climate and lack of personnel in the department. The *Leadership and Educational Change* course has allowed me to think out of the box and be creative with what can be done to support student success through student services as well as provided me with the understanding of the different frames to consider in implementing those new ideas. Through a STEM grant at Palomar College, I may be able to implement some of my ideas developed in the course Dr. Jeffcoat. These courses addressed the learning outcomes of organizational strategy (#1), organizational advocacy (#6) resource management (#2), professionalism (#7), collaboration (#5), and communication (#4).

The program has also provided very valuable and practical information related to being a community college employee. I have become a stronger faculty member through the *Finance and Law* course with Jim Austin and the *Strategic Planning* course with Dr. Sunita Cooke. The courses provided invaluable information. For example, the *Strategic Planning* course forced me to examine the culture at my own campus. We looked at things such as the process of decisions, the structure of administration, and what were possible trends in our local communities. The

course also emphasized the importance of a mission, vision, values and goals for a community college and how the mission should guide the decisions made on campus. Prior to this course, I could not see the relevance of knowing my college's mission. I saw the mission more as a bunch of generic words put together for the sake of having a mission. Now, I see the mission as an integral part of the development of a college. This course addressed the learning outcomes of organizational strategy (#1), organizational advocacy (#6) and resource management (#2) in addition to professionalism (#7), collaboration (#5), and communication (#4).

The *Law and Finance* course also had extremely valuable information. Not only did the course explain funding, Exhibit C, and California educational code and Title 5 regulations, but it also exposed me to current bills and future legislation to come. The course provided a bigger picture of postsecondary education within the state and assisted me in recognizing issues that will affect leadership at the community college. An example of an issue is the campaign for community college funding based on student success which is defined as degree completion and transfers. This course addressed the learning outcomes of financial and legal forces (#8), organizational advocacy (#6), and resource management (#2).

And finally, the *Qualitative Methods* course with Dr. Olney and Dr. Harris and the *Quantitative Methods* course with Dr. Jacobs had provided me with forms of inquiry for the methodology section of my research. The *Qualitative Methods* course was the seed for my dissertation topic of student-faculty interaction which also continued my lessons in relationships. Through the assignments in that course, I had a reminder of what it was like to be students through my own experience and through the observations and interviews I was conducting in class. The *Quantitative Methods* course has helped me to further understand the articles I have

been reading for the past year which assists in the development of my literature review. These courses fulfill the learning outcome of decision sciences (#9).

Achieving Program Learning Outcomes

As my learning relates to the program learning outcomes, all but two learning outcomes have been achieved. This includes instructional leadership and professionalism which have not been learning outcomes for the courses thus far. Despite these outcomes not being present in our courses thus far, I have seen examples of instructional leadership and professionalism through the faculty in the program. Through their actions, faculty have taught me how to critique without being condescending, how to acknowledge different communication styles, to see how personal life affects professional life and how that affects our students, and how to be patient. To teach exemplary instructional leadership is one thing, but to experience exemplary instructional leadership, especially from a student's perspective, is a completely other thing. I am extremely appreciative of my faculty.

Personal and Professional Goals

One of the reasons I went back to school was to become a better professor. I thought that I could learn how to be a better professor by remembering how to be a student. So, initially, I was more interested in leadership on campus as a faculty member, not as an administrator. After the *Strategic Planning* course, I began to think about administration. And now, administration is an option for the future. I see that greater amounts of change can be accomplished at an administrative level. And with the skills I have learned so far in this program, an administrative position does not seem so daunting.