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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

CAREER ADVANCEMENT, CAREER ENHANCEMENT, AND PERSONAL
GROWTH OF PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY GRADUATE PROGRAM ALUMNI

A dissertation presented in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Ruth I. Nichols

March, 2012

Linda Purrington, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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DEDICATION

To my family and friends, words cannot express the gratitude I feel for your continued motivation and support.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was two-fold: (a) to explore and describe the perceived impact of Pepperdine University's Educational Leadership Academy (ELA) on 2003-2006 ELA graduates' career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth; and (b) to obtain ELA graduates' suggestions for ELA program improvement to better prepare graduates for career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth.

This study used a qualitative phenomenological methodology design for data collection and analysis. Audio-recorded semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 30 individuals who graduated from the ELA program from 2003-2006. Ten key interview questions were asked to examine the career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth of ELA graduates as well as to explore program strengths and solicit ideas for program improvement.

The findings from this study indicated that ELA graduates: (a) enrolled in ELA to earn their degree and credential, to advance their careers, and increase their career mobility; (b) advanced to new leadership and or new administrative positions; (c) perceived ELA's greatest career advancement impact was advancement to new leadership/administrative positions and increased knowledge, skills, and experience; (d) perceived ELA's greatest career enhancement impact was a greater understanding and appreciation of the role of educational administration and enhanced confidence in professional skills; (e) perceived ELA's greatest personal growth impact were the development and or enhancement of professional skills, confidence, professional growth and goals, and a greater understanding and appreciation for the role of educational

administration; (f) perceived program curriculum and professors as program strengths; and (g) suggested focusing on daily logistics of educational administration and further career support as areas of ELA program improvement.

It was concluded that: (a) the ELA program had a strong positive impact on ELA graduates; (b) career advancement was a priority motivator for enrolling in the ELA program; (c) ELA graduates perceive career enhancement, career advancement, and personal growth to be nearly synonymous; and (d) overall, ELA graduates were highly satisfied with the ELA curriculum. A recommendation offered to improve the curriculum related to increasing opportunities for management/operational learning and experience. A recommendation related to career advancement was to provide students and graduates with additional career support.

Chapter 1: The Problem

Introduction and Background

Global, economic, technologic, and demographic changes have heightened the ever-increasing demands placed on California principals (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2010; Goldring & Schuermann, 2009; Lashway, 2002; U.S. Department of Education [USDE], Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). California Educational Administration Credential Program standards changed beginning in the 1990s in order to ensure that programs being offered were remaining current. All California universities and other approved organizations with existing Educational Administration Credential Programs were asked to re-submit their program descriptions for formal review and approval. Concurrently, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) program accreditation process also underwent changes and now requires that graduate educational administration degree and credential program providers engage in continuous program improvement and accountability efforts. With principal accountability at its all time highest (BLS, 2010; Goldring & Schuermann, 2009; Lashway, 2002; USDE, 2004), California universities have been under great scrutiny and are being held to high standards and performance outcomes with regards to their ability to provide relevant leadership preparation programs that meet today's school and district needs.

Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Leadership (GSEP) engages in continuous program improvement efforts to meet the growing accountability facing California university leadership programs. Founded in 1937 by George Pepperdine, Pepperdine University's purpose is to pursue the highest academic standards

within a context that celebrates and extends the spiritual and ethical ideas of the Christian faith (Pepperdine University, 2009a). Although Pepperdine University is an independent university affiliated with the Churches of Christ, it enrolls students of all races and faiths in Malibu, at four graduate campuses in Southern California, and at international campuses in Germany, England, Italy, and Argentina. Pepperdine University is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership (Pepperdine University, 2009a). According to Pepperdine University (2009b), GSEP involves faculty, staff, and students in an innovative learning community where integrative coursework and practical training prepares GSEP students to serve the needs of others through skilled leadership. GSEP's programs are fully accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the WASC.

For more than 40 years, Pepperdine has offered training for school leaders who seek the ability to conceptualize and understand learning communities in diverse social, cultural, political, economic, and legal environments. Pepperdine University's Educational Leadership Academy (ELA) is a 1-year master's degree and California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential program within the GSEP.

ELA is a master's degree program "dedicated to preparing leaders who are committed to the personal, professional, and organizational transformation necessary to create and lead schools that work for all students in our diverse society" (Pepperdine University, 2009c, p. 3). The ELA program meets the California Tier 1 Preliminary Services Credential requirements, consists of 30 units, and is organized into six interdependent strands:

1. Visioning and evaluating.
2. Understanding self and others.
3. Understanding teaching and learning.
4. Understanding environments.
5. Understanding and transforming organizations.
6. Foundations of inquiry and leadership field experience.

The first five course strands are studied in depth with learning focused on research-based practices and their application in the field. The sixth strand, field experience, provides students opportunities to gain leadership knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions by engaging in a year-long Participatory Action Research (PAR) project. This PAR project engages students in leading a compelling research-based and results oriented change initiative in their workplace in collaboration with others. Students identify a PAR purpose and research question in response to an identified need or opportunity. Students conduct a review of literature related to their area of focus, develop a plan of action, and then implement their plan, assess the outcomes, reflect upon the findings, and plan additional and iterative cycles. Through PAR, students seek to apply what they are learning in all of their ELA course strands as they study their personal leadership as part of the process.

As California university leadership programs attempt to meet current school and district needs, the ELA program faculty engages in program improvement work to ensure that candidates receive the most relevant and meaningful leadership preparation possible. ELA gathers data to inform ELA curriculum and instructional program improvement efforts through regular reviews of student work samples, professor observations of

student performance, student course grades, evaluation of field experience, leadership project presentations, leadership portfolios, student program completion rates, Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS), ELA Program Exit Survey (APES), and outcomes of curriculum mapping work. These sources of data reveal how well students are learning during the ELA program and upon completion of the program, but they do not provide information regarding student career advancement and personal growth beyond graduation.

Statement of the Problem

Data are collected annually from Pepperdine University's ELA students when they complete their ELA program studies regarding the perceived quality of students' overall ELA program experience and perceived level of their leadership preparedness in relation to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELS). Some efforts have been made to solicit feedback from graduates, however, the opportunity exists to conduct a more formal study of ELA students' career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth beyond graduation.

The researcher has often wondered who, out of her cohort and other graduating cohorts, have advanced in their careers after having graduated from the ELA program. In addition, the researcher, reflecting on her personal growth as a result of the ELA program, also wondered what, if any, personal growth was gained by other graduates of the same program. In learning about the need and opportunity to formal study ELA graduates from the ELA Program Academic Chair, the researcher pursued this focus for the purpose of this dissertation.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research was to study Pepperdine ELA graduates' perceptions about the impact of the ELA program on their subsequent career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. The secondary purpose was to obtain their suggestions for improving the ELA program to better prepare graduates for career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What perceived impact, if any, has the ELA program had on (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth of students who graduated from ELA from 2003-2006?
2. What suggestions, if any, do ELA program graduates from 2003-2006 have about improving the program overall and more specifically, with regards to (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth?

Importance of the Study

A study of the ELA program and its impact on ELA graduates is important because it will: (a) assess the impact of the program on ELA students in career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth after graduation; (b) assist Pepperdine University in assessing if the intent of the program is being met in these three areas; and (c) provide Pepperdine University with meaningful data to inform program improvement efforts. This study will provide a basis for future follow-up research studies that may be used by scholars, students, and administrators of the ELA at Pepperdine University. Many universities use in-house exit surveys upon graduation, but few have

yet to survey their alumni on career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth years after graduation. On a personal level, this study will respond to the researcher's interest, as an ELA graduate, to find out where other ELA graduates are in their careers.

Delimitations of the Study

This study focuses on Pepperdine University GSEP alumni who graduated from the ELA program in years 2003-2006. The researcher knows eight of the subjects, all of whom graduated in 2005.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to Pepperdine GSEP ELA 2003-2006 graduates for whom contact information is available. This study is also limited to those Pepperdine GSEP ELA 2003-2006 graduates who are willing to participate as subjects. This study is based on data gathered from self-report measures.

Statement of Assumptions

It is assumed that all respondents in this study were truthful and candid in their responses to study questions. The researcher made every effort to conduct the study and present the results without bias.

Definitions of Terms

California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs) – Six standards of quality, also known as the Comprehensive Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs), that indicate what successful educational leaders practice and are used as guidelines in leadership preparation, professional development activities, and administrator certification and district assessments (California School Leadership

Academy, 2009). CPSELs are based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and CCTC standards and are the basis of administrator development (Siskiyou County Office of Education, 2007).

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) – As a state standards board for educator preparation for the public schools of California, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC, 2007) serves as “the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in the State, the enforcement of professional practices of educators, and the discipline of credential holders in the State of California” (p. 1).

Career advancement – For the purposes of this study, career advancement refers to the progression of the particular occupation for which one was trained. This includes those individuals whose career advancement was related to position changes requiring a California Professional Administrative Services Credential as well as those whose career advancement reflected increased responsibility but for which the California Professional Administrative Services Credential was not required.

Career enhancement – For the purposes of this study, career enhancement refers to the augmentation or improvement of an individual’s career knowledge, understanding, ability, skills, and potential.

Educational Leadership Academy (ELA) Program – For purposes of this study, the ELA program refers to a 1-year single-track master’s degree program offered by Pepperdine University’s Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP). It is a cohort-based leadership program offered to currently practicing educators.

Graduates – Student candidates, who, having met the academic requirements specified by Pepperdine University and the CCTC, have been awarded Master of Science

degrees in Administration at Pepperdine University's GSEP, as well as the California Tier 1 Preliminary Administrative Services Credential.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) – A program of the Council of Chief State School Officers that develops model standards for school leaders and presents “a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. iii).

Opinions – Individual graduate views or judgments of the quality of the ELA program based on his/her personal experiences and other variables. The word *opinions* will be used interchangeably with *views*, *experiences*, *thoughts*, and *perspectives* in this study.

Personal Growth – The process of being conscious of one's thoughts, feelings, prejudices, and judgments, and using this personal knowledge to act with mindfulness and in greater accordance with one's values and potential. Key to personal growth is continual development in the face of new challenges (Levine et al., 2006).

Respondents – Individuals who will reply to the survey invitation.

Researcher's Relationship to Topic

The researcher graduated from the ELA program with an M.S. in Administration along with a Certificate of Eligibility in 2005 with immediate aspirations of becoming a school leader in an entry-level administrative capacity as a Facilitator, a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), or an Assistant Principal. Since 2005, the researcher has used her leadership skills and knowledge as a Summer School Lead Teacher, a Master Teacher, Grade Level Representative, and continued to facilitate the leadership fieldwork

project she created as a result of Pepperdine requirements at the school at which she was working at the time. However, after the first year of applying for and not securing an administrative position, the researcher decided to apply to Pepperdine University's Organizational Leadership doctoral program to broaden her leadership knowledge to organizations rather than school leadership and administration.

Over the course of 5 years, the researcher has attempted to apply for several administrative positions. With strains on the California budget and many other factors affecting the administrative job market, it has made a once hopeful career search into a daunting task. Given this, the researcher often wondered if others in her cohort faced the same challenges she has been facing or if they had in fact accomplished their career goals and or served in leadership or administrative positions. The researcher also wondered if the ELA program had in fact prepared her sufficiently to compete and meet the needs of the districts searching for administrators.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the background of the study. It included: the introduction to the problem, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature on the history of the administrative services credential, the Administrative Services Credential structure, program accountability for programs offering the Administrative Services Credential, the history of Pepperdine University's ELA program, ELA program improvement and accreditation efforts, and graduate program student satisfaction as it relates to career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth

development. Chapter 3 describes the research method and design. Chapter 4 presents data findings and Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings, a presentation of conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction and Background

The demand for effective school administrative leadership is on the rise. *Accountability*, according to Goldring and Schuermann (2009), “has increased the visibility and responsibilities of educational leaders” (p. 10). School leaders play a crucial role in “developing a vision for a high-quality education for every student and in implementing and supporting a learning environment that is developed and shared by key stakeholders” (USDE, 2004, p. v). Growing concern over a shortage of qualified “top-notch” principals able to face the escalating demands of No Child Left Behind surfaced in 2001 (Lashway, 2002; USDE, 2004). No Child Left Behind placed pressure on school leaders to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap (USDE, 2004) by “mandating that schools bring *all* children—including racial minorities, English-language learners, and students with disabilities—to an adequate level of progress” (Lashway, 2002, p. 2). Now, as education faces the demands of preparing its students for the 21st century and unrelenting anxieties over “an increasingly competitive global economic environment” (Cowie & Crawford, 2007, p.130), a school leader’s job has not only “been transformed by extraordinary economic, demographic, technological, and global change” (Levine, 2005, p.11); they must also “face a daunting array of challenges, are called upon to serve an evolving range of roles, and must draw upon a breadth of knowledge and skills to provide effective leadership to the students, teachers, and communities whom they serve” (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009, p. 9). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), principals and assistant principals should have excellent job prospects due to a sharp increase in responsibilities that make the job more stressful and have

inevitably discouraged some teachers from taking positions in administration.

Administrators are being held more accountable for the performance of students and teachers, while at the same time they are required to adhere to a growing number of government regulations (BLS, 2010). In addition, administrators must deal with overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, safety issues, and budgetary concerns. These additional concerns lead many teachers to feel that the increase in pay for becoming an administrator is not high enough to compensate for the greater responsibilities (BLS, 2010).

Along with these demands and Levine's (2005) criticism educational administration programs are the weakest of all the programs at the nation's education schools, preparation colleges, and universities, administrative preparation programs have felt pressure to reform their programs (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; USDE, 2004). Levine has stated the importance of preparing educational leaders with the knowledge and skills to:

(a) align school systems with the achievement of clear, measurable goals and standards related to student learners, (b) play a key role in articulating and setting standards, (c) develop and understand measures of accountability, (d) align local expectations and accountability with external frameworks, and (e) hold their staff accountable for implementing strategies that align teaching and learning with achievement goals and targets set by policy. (Levine, 2005, p.10)

Scholars have noted a combination of facets that contribute to the effectiveness of a school administrator preparation program, including the strategic recruitment and rigorous screening of potential candidates where schools and universities work in partnership to develop a ready supply of well-prepared school leaders (Kelly, 2009;

Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2007; USDE, 2004), use authentic coursework, and integrate field experiences (USDE, 2004). Leadership succession plans, where districts create early opportunities for identified promising teachers to develop leadership skills, have also been taken under consideration to ensure the quality of leadership for school success (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; SREB, 2007). In order to create a model or exemplary preparation program, Levine (2005) suggested that programs meet the following nine criteria:

1. *Purpose*. Programs should have an explicit purpose which focuses on the education of practicing school leaders;
2. *Curricular coherence*. The curriculum mirrors program purpose and goals by being rigorous, coherent and organized;
3. *Curricular balance*. It should integrate the theory and practice of administration by balancing study in the university classroom and work in schools with successful practitioners;
4. *Faculty composition*. The faculty 's size and fields of expertise are aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment;
5. *Admissions*. Recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders;
6. *Degrees*. Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession;
7. *Research*. Research is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and or policy makers;
8. *Finances*. Resources are adequate to support the program;

9. *Assessment.* The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance. (p. 13)

Orr and Orphanos (2011), through reviews of extensive research on exemplary leadership preparation programs, drew the following similar conclusions about exemplary program elements:

- A well-defined theory of leadership for school improvement that frames and integrates the program features around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge.
- A coherent curriculum that addresses effective instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management and that aligns with state and professional standards.
- Active learning strategies that integrate theory and practice and stimulate reflection.
- Quality internships that provide intensive developmental opportunities to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner–mentor.
- Knowledgeable (about their subject matter) faculty.
- Social and professional support, including organizing students into cohorts that take common courses together in a prescribed sequence, formalized mentoring, and advising from expert principals.
- The use of standards-based assessments for candidate and program feedback and continuous improvement that are tied to the program vision and objectives. (p. 22)

Although there is much debate over what aspects a quality school administration preparation program should encompass (Barnett, 2004; Levine, 2005; Murphy, 2001), universities in California are held to certain program accountabilities and must meet criteria and follow established standards in order to offer administrative preparation programs and the Administrative Services Credential.

School administration is being reshaped by forces in the environment (Murphy, 2001) and education leadership programs that are preparing school leaders are evolving and undergoing changes to address these economic, social, and political needs (Barnett, 2004; Murphy, 2001). According to Murphy (2001), education leadership is shifting its focus from educational administration as management to educational administration primarily concerned with teaching and learning. Some qualities a school administrator should embody include: (a) an understanding of caring and humanistic concerns as a key to effective leadership, (b) knowledge of the transformational and change dynamics of the superintendency, (c) an appreciation of the collegial and collaborative foundations of school administration, and (d) an emphasis on the ethical and reflective dimensions of leadership. For the purpose of this study, a distinction must be made between the terms *leadership* and *administration*.

There are many leadership roles in California that do not require an administrative credential, but have leadership responsibilities. Leadership positions that do not require an administrative credential include, but are not limited to, teachers on special assignment (TOSA), department chairs, and grade level chairpersons. Leadership is more commonly defined as having influence over a group to achieve goals (Northouse, 2004; Robbins, 2005). Further, leadership is a process, involves influence, occurs within a group context,

and involves the attainment of a goal (Northouse, 2004). In contrast, James Lipham (as cited in Snowden & Gorton, 1998) described the administrator as one who is a stabilizing force using existing structures or procedures to achieve goals, whereas a leader initiates changes in established structures, procedures, or goals. Snowden and Gorton (1998) further clarify the distinction:

An administrator can be a leader by attempting to introduce change, but is not a leader just because the individual occupies what has been referred to as a “leadership position.” It is not the position that determines whether someone is a leader; it is the nature of that individual’s behavior while occupying that position. (p. 65)

History of the California Administrative Services Credential

Given the ever-changing demands that school administrators face, the design and criteria for administrator credentialing in California has undergone tremendous change throughout a 40-year period. The CCTC, an agency in the Executive Branch of California State Government, was created by the Ryan Act in 1970, with its major purpose being to serve as a state standards board for educator preparation for the public schools of California, the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in the State, the enforcement of professional practices of educators, and the discipline of credential holders in the State of California. (CCTC, 2004a, p. 3)

The CCTC (2004a) is responsible for establishing and implementing strong and effective standards of quality to prepare and assess educators and school leaders.

Before the CCTC initiated its two-level Administrative Services Clear Credential structure in 1984, which includes both the Preliminary Administrative Services

Credential and the Professional Administrative Services Credential, CCTC issued a single credential, the Administrative Services Credential, which authorized service in any administrative position (CCTC, 2004a). This two-level structure was designed not only to meet Commission guidelines, but also provide to “preparation for entry into a first administrative position, and include a plan for advanced preparation and targeted professional growth during the initial years of service, no matter what administrative service the credential holder performed” (CCTC, 2004a, p. 5). In 1990, the Commission initiated a comprehensive study of the implementation of previous reform measures conducted over 2 years to examine the content and structure of preparation programs, professional experiences, and other credentialing policies for school administrators, and to recommend needed changes (CCTC, 2004a).

On March 5, 1993, the CCTC issued its report entitled, *An Examination of the Preparation, Induction, and Professional Growth of School Administrators for California*. The report recommended retaining the two-level structure for the Administrative Services Credential and responding more to the professional development needs of future and currently practicing administrators. The Commission began implementing some of the new structural components on May 1, 1994, issuing the new Certificate of Eligibility for the Preliminary Services Credential to those who were completing a preliminary program. Later, in August 1994, the first set of *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs* were adopted (CCTC, 2004a). These standards have since been retained and are in current use by program sponsors and programs offering the Preliminary Administrative Service Credential.

Six years after the first set of standards was adopted, the Commission approved another review of the Administrative Services Credential structure as changes in school practices, priorities, adoption of student content standards, and greater accountability affected expectations placed on California school administrators (CCTC, 2004a). In 2002, the Commission created objectives for Administrative Services Credential reform and also sponsored legislation, SB 1655, Chapter 225 of the Statutes of 2002, to address the objectives by (a) creating an option for alternative administrative preparation programs, and (b) establishing examination-based routes in earning administrative services credentials. An action plan was adopted by the Commission in March 2002 that addressed the revision of Title 5 regulations related to certificate requirements, and suggested the creation of an Administrative Services Credential Design Team that would meet recommend revisions to the Commission's standards for administrator preparation programs. This design team would meet monthly from May 2002 to February 2003 to develop the *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs* (CCTC, 2004a).

After a field review of the draft standards took place in January and February of 2003, the final Preliminary Administrative Service Credential programs were adopted by the commission in May 2003, which were later revised in November 2003, after new standards called for program curriculum to be organized to address the six CPSELs and not the five thematic areas in previous standards. The CPSELs were adapted from the national administrator standards created by the ISLLC and are the focus for curriculum development for California's administrator preparation programs (CCTC, 2004a):

- Standard 1 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Standard 2 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- Standard 3 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- Standard 4 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Standard 5 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by modeling a personal code of ethics and developing professional leadership capacity.
- Standard 6 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (WestEd and the Association of California School Administrators, 2004)

California has undergone changes in school administrator credentialing as a result of the ever-changing demands they face. To meet these demands, the process of issuing a single credential upon program completion became obsolete and was replaced by the two-level California Administrative Services Credential (preliminary and professional credential). CPSELs were added to administrative credential program curriculum to ensure that they were addressing the current needs and issues facing today's public school administrators (WestEd and the Association of California School Administrators, 2004).

Administrative Services Credential Structure

California's Administrative Services Credential is a two-leveled structure; the first level is completed before an individual assumes administrative responsibilities, and the second level is completed concurrent with the first few years of administrative service and is targeted as professional development (CCTC, 2004a). The commission believes that the standards in the handbook, *Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for Administrative Credential Programs*, set a foundation for high quality school leadership for the public schools of California (CCTC, 2004a). Administrative Services Credentials are issued by the CCTC to those individuals who have demonstrated competence in California's standards for school leadership by completing a Commission-approved administrator preparation program (see Appendices A and B) or another alternative route that has been authorized by California law (CCTC, 2004a). The Administrative Services Credential authorizes the following services in grades 12 and below, including preschool, and in classes organized primarily for adults:

- Develop, coordinate, and assess instructional programs.

- Evaluate certificated and classified personnel.
- Provide students' discipline, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion.
- Provide certificated and classified employees discipline, including but not limited to, suspension, dismissal, and reinstatement.
- Supervise certificated and classified personnel.
- Manage school site, district, or county level fiscal services.
- Recruit, employ, and assign certificated and classified personnel.
- Develop, coordinate, and supervise student support services, including but not limited to extracurricular activities, pupil personnel services, health services, library services, and technology support services. (CCTC, 2004a, p. 1)

In preschool, grades K-12, and adults, the Administrative Services Credential provides the following services:

- Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of instructional services at the school site level.
- Evaluate certificated personnel employed at the school site level, with the exception of the site administrator.
- Student and certificated personnel employee discipline services at the school site level. (CCTC, 2004a, p. 1)

Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Requirements

The requirements for seeking a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential include: (a) possession of a valid prerequisite teaching or services credential; (b) a minimum of 3 years of successful, full-time service in the public schools or private

schools of equivalent status; (c) passage of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST); (d) an administrative position (until an offer of employment in an administrative position is received individuals should apply for a Certificate of Eligibility); and (e) completion of one of the following four program options:

- Option 1 - A college or university based program accredited by the CCTC.
- Option 2 - A Commission accredited Internship program sponsored by a college or university and a local education agency.
- Option 3 - The Commission-approved “School Leaders Licensure Assessment” (SLLA) administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS).
- Option 4 - An alternative preparation program approved by the Commission. (Association of California School Administrators [ACSA], 2008b)

The above programs must meet all of the *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs* (CCTC, 2004a). The preliminary level program aims at preparing individuals to perform entry-level administrative positions. The program should include both knowledge and practice components and requires significant field experience, focusing on the development of leadership and management skills (CCTC, 2004a). Once candidates have completed their Administrative Services Credential program, the *Certificate of Eligibility for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential* is issued after applying and receiving the recommendation of their program’s sponsor. This certificate allows individuals the opportunity to seek employment as an administrator. Once he/she has secured an administrative position, the candidate must apply for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, authorizing service as an administrator, and is valid for 5 years

(CCTC, 2004a). As the administrator moves along in his/her administrative position, he/she has the opportunity to earn his/her Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential.

California Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential

After having received the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, individuals must complete the required two years of administrative experience as well as select one of the following five options towards the completion of the Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential within a 5-year period of time:

1. Complete a Commission-accredited Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential Program; or
2. Demonstrate mastery of fieldwork performance standards as required for candidates in a Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential Program; or
3. Complete of a training program offered under the provisions of AB 75 (E.C. §44510-44517) and approved by the California State Board of Education; or
4. Complete a Commission-approved Alternative Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential Program; or
5. Pass a national administrator performance assessment adopted by the Commission. (CCTC, 2004a, p. 9)

According to the CCTC (2004a), support, mentoring, and assistance are the major purposes of the professional level program, as well as making the effort to move the administrator beyond the functional aspects of the job and on to reflective thinking about

his/her role as in creating an environment conducive to effect and creative teaching, as well as to student success.

The Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential is valid for 5 years and can be renewed by (a) completing an individually designed program of professional growth activities (150 clock hours), (b) required school service of 90 days, and (c) the application and fee. The Preliminary and Professional Clear Administrative Services Credentials can be obtained in alternative ways besides traditional preparation programs, including: assessment or examination-based routes, internship format, course work, induction programs, field work, coaching, or an alternative program (ACSA 2008a; CCTC, 2004a; Janssen 2010a).

School Leaders Licensure Assessment

SB 1655 (Chap. 225, Stats. 2002), which added Education Code §44270.5, gives the CCTC the option to provide an examination alternative to the Preliminary Administrative Services professional preparation program (Janssen, 2010a). In January 2003, Educational Testing Services began offering the School Leaders' Licensure Assessment (SLLA) to satisfy the examination option of obtaining the preliminary Administrative Services Credential (Janssen, 2010a). According to Jensen (2005), "California is the only state that has adopted the SLLA as a stand-alone replacement for a formal preparation program" (p. 4). The SLLA is a 6-hour test that assesses candidates' skills in situational analysis, problem solving, and decision making in educational leadership scenarios and requires a passing score of 173 out of 200 (ACSA, 2008b). According to Birch and Novelli (2010), in October 2008 the CCTC "approved the continued use of the examination option and directed staff to develop a California-

specific examination that included a focus on California school law, finances, organization, and English learner issues” (p. 1). The CCTC announced that SLLA exam #1010, last administered on February 26, 2011, has been replaced by the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE), with an initial administration date of June 2011 (Janssen, 2010a).

California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination

The CPACE consists of two sections, the Written Examination and the Video Performance Assessment, both of which the examinee must pass. The written examination is computer based, 4 hours long, and consists of 70 multiple-choice items with an additional four constructed response items that include one case study (Janssen, 2010b). The video assessment requires the examinee to:

complete a video packet that includes a description of the setting and intent of the presentation, a 10-minute video of the candidate making the presentation, and a reflection form on which the candidate provides an appraisal of the recorded event. (Janssen, 2010b, p. 2)

Minimum passing scores for both tests is 220 out of 300 (CPACE, 2011).

The creation and availability of alternative pathways has created mixed perceptions and views in the educational community, especially of examination-based administrative candidates (Jensen, 2005; Kelly, 2009). Jensen (2005) found that although the majority (52%) of California superintendents surveyed indicated they would employ site administrators who qualified by examination, 48% stated that they would not consider them for employment. Those in favor of the examination-based credential stated they would not hesitate hiring someone who obtained his/her credential through the

examination and that the process to obtain it should not minimize the candidate's qualifications. Superintendents and administrators unsupportive of the examination-based credential expressed concerns about the lowering of standards and loss of professional prestige, stating that shortcuts to leadership preparation and alternative certification reinforces the notion that anyone can teach or become a principal (Jensen, 2005). Although the continuation of hiring based on qualification by examination route was a future recommendation of both studies (Jensen, 2005; Kelly, 2009), it was also noted that during the hiring process "candidates had to validate prior administrative-like experience regardless of how they obtained their initial certification" (Jensen, 2005, p. 8). According to Jensen, formal or informal prior leadership experience in education carries considerable weight during the hiring process.

University Internship Programs

University internship programs are another pathway towards earning either the Preliminary or Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential. University programs can apply to have an intern program that is developed and implemented in collaboration with the district and university and wherein intern candidates: (a) get compensated for their service; (b) are responsible, at an accelerated pace, for the duties that are related to the credential; and (c) are exposed to programs that blend theory and practice to expedite skill acquirement (CCTC, 2004a). Orr and Orphanos (2011) found that supportive program structures, a comprehensive and standards-based curriculum, and broader, more intensive internships were significantly related to actual career advancement. Many California State Universities offer an administrative internship program in which preliminary administrative credential students work as an administrator

while in the program (California State University San Bernadino [CSUSB], 2009). University internship credentials are issued to individuals enrolled in a Commission-approved internship programs that are in partnership with local school districts (CCTC, 2004b). Some programs outside of California, such as Delta State's Educational Leadership Program in Cleveland, Mississippi, offer a full-time internship experience and financial support so that teachers may leave the classroom to spend a year preparing to be a principal (LaPointe, Davis, & Cohen, 2007).

Alternative Clear Credentialing Program

The Alternative Clear Credentialing Program (ACCP), an alternative program for the Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential offered through the partnership of the ACSA and the New Teacher Center (NTC), provides 2 years of on-site individualized coaching by certified Leadership Coaches to novice school administrators (ACSA, 2008c). Candidates create individualized plans to demonstrate performance of the CPSELs, and those who are successful receive their credential at the end of the 2-year period (ACSA, 2008c). ACSA also offers the Administrator Training Program, the re-authorization of AB 430, which provides funding to school districts and other local educational agencies (LEAs) to train principals and vice principals in their roles as instructional leaders (ACSA, 2008d). Upon completion of the training, participants receive certification that may be used for the Professional Clear Administrative Credential (ACSA, 2008d).

Program Accountability for Educational Administrative Credential Programs in California

The CCTC (2004a) considers the preparation of school administrators to be critical to student success. As a result, a key responsibility of the Commission is the establishment and implementation of strong and effective standards for administrator preparation programs. A part of meeting these expectations is being an accredited institution that is expected to satisfy two sets of standards: (a) *common standards* that involve the overall leadership and climate of an educator preparation program at an institution and are the same for all credential programs; and (b) *program standards*, also known as *Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness*, that are aspects of the program particular to a credential (CCTC, 2004a). Not only must school administration programs be aware of the California Preparation Program Standards and the approval structure, they must also meet the requirements of the *Preconditions* for Multiple and Single Subject Professional Preparation Programs, which determine the sponsor's eligibility for accreditation.

Pepperdine University programs. Pepperdine University offers a California teaching credential through a Master of Arts in the *Education with Teaching Credential* program and a Preliminary Administrative Services credential through a Master of Science in the *Administration and Preliminary Administrative Services Credential* program. Candidates pursuing their Professional Clear Administrative Credential have the option to enroll in the Doctor of Education programs in *Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy, Organizational Leadership, and Learning Technologies*. Because it is an institution that issues credentials, Pepperdine University must follow the

Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for Administrative Credential Programs established by the CCTC.

Pepperdine University accreditation. Pepperdine University is also accredited through the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the WASC. Accreditation, according to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2008), “is a process of external quality review used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and educational programs for quality assurance and quality improvement” (p. 1) and ensures that “the education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 1). The CCTC accredits institutions and extends this accreditation to all programs offered at that institution (Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC], 2008). The CCTC has established formal procedures that, when satisfied, will lead to accreditation (WASC, 2009). Beginning in 2007 and into 2010, CCTC and WASC accreditation changes involved the ELA in a continuous cycle of annual accountability reporting wherein ELA engages in several rounds of internal course action changes (process of University approval through University Academic Council; L. Purrington, personal communication, November 13, 2010).

History of Pepperdine University Educational Leadership Academy

In their descriptive report, *Preparing Administrators to Meet the Challenges of a Multicultural Society* (1995), Paull et al. (1995) describe that over 30 years ago, Pepperdine University and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) established the Leadership Academy, “the first joint university/school district leadership academy for the development of entry-level school administrators in California” (p. 45). The program

committee for administrative preparation at Pepperdine University's GSEP undertook a complete restructuring of the Leadership Academy.

Paull et al. (1995) explain that not only were there changes in multicultural population, challenges facing the Los Angeles global community, and complex turbulent times that prompted the restructuring, the following events also coincided to prompt the committee to revise the program:

- *The retirement of Arthur Adams.* Adams was the program director of the Leadership Academy for many years and the force behind the initial development of the academy. He had built strong relationships within the LAUSD and by the time he retired, the people with whom he built these relationships had retired as well.
- *Climate change in LAUSD.* Efforts were being put in place to restructure the highly centralized district into one with site-based management. Also, a community-based reform effort, the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Restructuring Now (LEARN), was being created.
- *Student exit interviews.* As students were questioned during their exit interviews, their responses reflected a lack of deep understanding of the theoretical base that was felt to be essential to be effective in the present school systems.
- *Hiring of new faculty.* Three new faculty members, a visiting professor, and a significant number of new adjuncts were hired and thought to bring new perspectives. (Paull et al. 1995, p. 47)

Other influences also affected the initial decision to revise the program, such as: school district culture changes; an increase in the importance of technology in educational administration, instruction, and leadership; tougher economic times impacting enrollment in masters programs; changes in expectations for students and teachers in the public schools; and the appearance of new program requirements that were established in 1994 by the CCTC (Paull et al. 1995).

Early in the program revision process, there was a conscious effort to not explore the program requirements that would take effect from the CCTC, but instead look into the program's own beliefs and values and conduct their own research (Paull et al., 1995).

Paull et al. (1995) point out the mission that was developed for the new Academy:

To prepare leaders who are capable of and committed to creating and leading schools that work for everyone in our diverse society. We envision these leaders to be persons who have a positive vision of the future, the character and courage to collaborate with others to shape that vision, and the skills and competencies to make certain their actions today lead tomorrow's best practices. (Paull et al., 1995, p. 46)

It was decided early in the program revision process to operate the committee process by consensus, a process that mirrored what had been taught to students using site-based management (Paull et al., 1995). The success of this redevelopment process, according to Paull et al. (1995), was attributed to the successful collaboration that developed in the program redevelopment, which included having the staff program coordinator, any adjunct faculty, or additional full-time faculty in attendance. Along with consensus, Paull et al. explains that conscious efforts were made toward maintaining

authentic interaction, appreciating one another throughout disagreements, and working with one another's strengths, weaknesses, and points of view. Having authentic relationships also played a major role in the committee process. Paull et al. addressed the continuous attention to and constantly evolving strategies used by the committee to keep this redevelopment process authentic:

1. One member of the committee, during the meetings, was responsible for attending to the process, with the first two items on the agenda being process related;
2. The first item on the agenda, conducted by a committee member, was a devotional used to set the context of the meeting;
3. The process, which is the second item on the agenda, was intended to discuss the special needs and concerns that the committee members have related to the committee, the meeting, or the program. These needs were either addressed and resolved at the meeting or an action plan is created to address the issues at a specific time in the future;
4. A committee development component was added to the meetings to discuss the content and process of faculty courses or have a staff development experience, which was lead by a committee member;
5. Relationships were developed by increasing the number of informal social interactions among committee members and with other faculty members in the Education Division;
6. The committee increased the amount of time it met from once a month or every other month to 5 hours twice a month;

7. Additional stakeholders were added during the developmental process in an effort to build support within the University and began to meet with the Dean. The Dean advised that the plans be grounded in research and that the committee have the ability to communicate the plan so people outside of the field of educational administration could understand the plans. In the past practitioner experiential knowledge was emphasized over the reflective research knowledge-base of the field.
8. The faculty of the Education Division was formally and informally requested for input and support throughout the process; the President of the University and the Provost were also involved.
9. Input was sought from stakeholders outside of the University as well. A Principal's Forum was created where Los Angeles principals could interact in small and large groups and the University faculty listened. (pp. 48-50)

Time was a notable component of the program development, where committee members volunteered to a temporary de facto increase in their workload by being available for almost 300 percent more meeting time and committing to teach together without additional compensation while they were designing new courses, and modeling team teaching. The Dean and Associate Dean increased their interactions with committee members. (Paull et al., 1995, p. 50)

As for preliminary research, Paull et al. (1995) intertwined the developmental process and preliminary research, had committee members attend conferences, reviewed case studies, hired a visiting professor to assist in directing the revision effort, and

conducted site visits to exemplary schools and had discussions with the principals of those schools. Some members also participated in elements of the LEARN training. After the committee felt all preliminary research had been completed they reviewed the CCTC 1996 proposed future standards for administrator preparation.

The curriculum sought to give students an opportunity to “learn the essential elements of the knowledge base, an opportunity to transfer the meaning constructed in one course to other courses, to field work and ultimately to their day to day practices as administrators” (Paull, 1995, p. 51). Reflecting on how previous courses were offered, it was decided that:

- The number of courses were to be decreased from eight courses of three semester units each to four new courses, or strands, three with six units and one with five units; three of the strands would be presented over two trimesters with the final five unit strand being presented in the final trimester;
- Each academy would begin with an introductory weekend on visioning and concluded with a final weekend for revisioning and conducting exit interviews;
- Year-long fieldwork, which included traditional management experiences and a clearly defined leadership project, would be incorporated;
- Reflective seminars would meet once every 3 weeks to provide a context for practicum coaching; and
- Each student would spend 6 days a year visiting exemplary schools, interacting with administrators, and attend professional conferences.

As a result, the courses were integrated with the following concepts – concepts the committee agreed should be ingrained in all of the strands and in field activities:

- That exemplary practice, theory, and research are related.
- That quality, an outcome driven systems approach, and sound personal values are essential to the understanding of leadership.
- That this is the technological age and a technological approach to the processing of information is essential for educational leadership. (Paull et al., 1995, p. 53)

The teaching strategies used, which emphasized collaboration and a high level of interaction between faculty and students, focused on “team teaching, cooperative learning, peer and self assessment, case studies, and individualized learning assignments” (Paull et al., 1995). The following program courses were developed for the Leadership Academy:

- Developing a Vision for Educational Leadership
- Understanding Self and People
- Understanding Teaching and Learning
- Understanding Environments
- Understanding and Transforming Organizations
- Evaluating, Revisioning, and Planning (Paull et al., 1995)

Plans for evaluation of the pilot program included a summative evaluation and data were gathered using questionnaires, course and faculty evaluation sheets, student group seminars conducted by an outside facilitator and formative evaluation seminars conducted with students by program faculty. Evaluations focused on: (a) personal

transformation, (b) content or knowledge base, (c) skill base, (d) on the job performance, (e) student beliefs and perceptions, and (f) faculty beliefs and perceptions (Paull et al., 1995). The committee was guided by Michael Patton's work in Utilization Focused Evaluation; Alexander Astin, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles; and an expert on evaluation techniques to gather information on the impact the program had on students and faculty, and focused on personal transformation, content or knowledge base, skill base, on the job performance, student beliefs or perceptions, and faculty beliefs or perceptions (Paull et al., 1995).

ELA Program Improvement and Accreditation Efforts

In 2003, the CCTC called for program curriculum to be organized to address the six CPSELs (CCTC, 2004a). That same year, the ELA began addressing the new CPSELs in an effort to incorporate them into their curriculum while maintaining the core of its program (L. Purrington, personal communication, July 6, 2009). The ELA program continued to evolve in many ways, and as Purrington and VandenBerge (2006) indicate, emphasis was not only placed on addressing the CPSELs; focus was also placed on inquiry, data analysis, and culturally proficient practices.

From 2005-2006, the ELA faculty retreat identified focus areas for curriculum improvement and engaged in Course Action Changes (process of university approval through University Academic Council; L. Purrington, personal communication, November 13, 2010). On a regular basis, data about candidate and program performance were collected and assessed through multiple sources: external agency reports, program entrance surveys, program exit surveys, alumni surveys, admission/enrollment data, graduation data, course evaluations, graduate surveys, faculty retreat discussions, faculty

monthly meeting discussions, faculty meeting discussions each term, ongoing discussions with program partners, and ongoing discussions with program candidates. Monthly ELA Faculty meetings, end-of-the-year faculty meetings, and faculty retreats focused on student progress/concerns/needs, program accomplishments, program status, review data and feedback to the current program design, and directions for improvement. In 2005, the focus of the ELA faculty retreat was informed by: (a) graduate program survey summaries; (b) input from current students; (c) a historical account of original ELA program purpose, design, and development; (d) input from current full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty; and (e) a review of CPSELs and new CCTC Program Quality Standards (Purrington & VandenBerge, 2006).

The retreat discussion resulted in seven key questions that would serve to guide program improvement efforts:

1. What management knowledge and skills are needed by public, private, and charter school leaders? How and where are these needs addressed in the ELA program?
2. To what degree is inquiry intentionally addressed in all courses and should we move towards fully embedding this strand within existing courses as opposed to having it as separate but related two-unit strand?
3. What are the most important knowledge and skills for the leadership of human resources and where and how should they best be addressed in the ELA program?
4. How might one unit be recaptured at the beginning of the program to lay the foundation for personal and shared-vision development?

5. How might core faculty provide time within their courses to better allow students to make theory-practice connections as they relate to field leadership project work?
6. What, where, and how are we providing students with the technology knowledge and skills they need to be effective educational leaders?
7. What knowledge, skills, and dispositions do educational leaders need related to special education in today's school environments? Where and how are these needs addressed in ELA? (Purrington & VandenBerge, 2006, p. 13)

According to Purrington and VandenBerge (2006), "the seven questions that resulted from the 2005 ELA Faculty retreat have become the focus for ELA program improvement efforts" (p. 14) and the process that was recommended to address the retreat outcomes was curriculum mapping. The curriculum mapping was intended "to make faculty aware of each other's course objectives, course readings, course activities, course projects/performances, and measures of assessment" (Purrington & VandenBerge, 2006, p. 14). As a result, faculty recommended a redistribution of units to:

- Strengthen the introduction of candidates to the development of a personal leadership vision;
- Anchor the understanding of inquiry and data analysis in the Understanding Teaching and Learning strand;
- Incorporate human resources learning into the Understanding Environments strand; and

- Provide course time at the end of the program for candidates to revisit their personal leadership vision and plan for their future growth and development.

(Purrington & VandenBerge, 2006, p. 14)

The most significant change, according to ELA Director Purrington (personal communication, July 6, 2009), was changing the fieldwork experience to include planning, implementing, and evaluating the leadership project. As a result, the field experience was re-shaped to include a compelling project and alternative level learning experiences, more units were given to field supervisors in an effort to provide professors the opportunity to focus on greater individual candidate attention and support, and the expectations for leadership projects, project presentations, and leadership portfolios were more clearly defined and better aligned with the following ELA program learning goals and objectives:

- ELA graduates will facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community and that promotes the success of all students.
- ELA graduates will advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to the success of all students and staff professional growth.
- ELA graduates will ensure the management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, effective learning environment for all students and members of the learning community.

- ELA graduates will collaborate with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources in support of the success of all students.
- ELA graduates will model a personal code of ethics and develop professional leadership capacity in support of the success of all students and members of the learning community.
- ELA graduates will understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context in support of the success for all students and members of the learning community. (Purrington, 2009, p. 3)

The framework for the ELA program goals, program design, and program delivery were shaped by the ISLLC National Standards, CPSELs, Pepperdine University mission, and ELA mission (Purrington & VandenBerge, 2006). Purrington and VandenBerge (2006) make clear that a strong commitment to cultural proficiency, the use of technology, a commitment to service, moral purpose, and possibility thinking were inherent in the six ELA educational goals that guided candidate learning.

In 2006, the ELA curriculum was organized into the following six content strands that Purrington and VandenBerge (2006) emphasize were sequenced in a strategic order to allow learning and relationships to build, develop, and deepen:

1. Understanding Self and Others.
2. Understanding Teaching and Learning.
3. Understanding Environments.
4. Understanding Inquiry and Data.
5. Understanding and Transforming Organizations.

6. Field Experience.

The foundation of the curriculum was influenced by several theorists including Malcolm Knowles and his theories on characteristics of adult learners and adult learning motivation and Ralph Tyler's general principals in selecting experiences and criteria for effective organization of learning. The connection between theory and practice was purposefully provided throughout all coursework and fieldwork experiences (Purrington & VandenBerge, 2006). In 2006, CCTC fully approved the ELA program as meeting all State Educational Administration Credential Program Standards.

From 2007-2010, CCTC and WASC accreditation processes prompted ELA to engage in another round of internal course action changes. Over this course of time, annual WASC program reports focused on Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), and the ELA blended model was developed and approved. ELA also partnered with districts and other entities, an off-campus program was offered in Fullerton in partnership with Fullerton Unified School District and a cohort of all Options for Youth educators, a guided independent study public charter school, was offered at the Pasadena campus through Options for Youth (L. Purrington, personal communication, November 13, 2010).

ELA focused its improvement efforts on engaging students in inquiry to lead change initiatives and to improve personal and organizational practice (L. Purrington, personal communication, August 13, 2009). ELA submitted an internal ELA Annual Review Report on August 1, 2009 and incorporated Inquiry PAR into the ELA student Field Experience as a qualitative methodology for guiding Leadership Project work (Purrington, 2009). According to James, Milenkiewicz, and Bucknam (2007), PAR is a

tool for educational leadership that allows educators to study, assess, and improve their own practices to make positive changes through the PAR action cycle. PAR also focuses on a community of practice where people in the community work together collaboratively (James et al., 2007). The PAR process is cyclical and researchers start the following same series of steps repeatedly during each iterative cycle:

1. Diagnose factors that contribute to the status quo.
2. Act with the intent of moving status quo to an increased level of effectiveness.
3. Measure the results of actions taken – work to achieve student level outcomes.
4. Reflect on the process and brainstorm situation and additional steps with others. (James et al., 2007, p. 16)

Four SLOs were created that integrate PAR into the field experience and would later guide the assessment of the implementation of PAR into the ELA program in 2008-2009:

- SLO #1 - ELA students will design Leadership Projects that are Inquiry-based PAR in their approach. Students will be able to describe: the specific education issue under study, the study purpose (research and action outcomes), research questions, previous studies, variables that will be measured, local measurements, and forms of analysis.
- SLO#2 - ELA students will demonstrate their ability to collect, organize, interpret, and use data to inform Leadership Project PAR steps including: Diagnosis, Action, Measurement, and Reflection
- SLO#3 - ELA students will articulate PAR Leadership Project outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations.

- SLO #4 - ELA students will describe what they have learned about their leadership practice as a result of their Leadership Project work and how their learning will inform their future plans for personal/professional growth.
(Purrington, 2009, pp. 1-2).

According to Purrington (personal communication, July 6, 2009), the field experience has evolved into one in which the student plans, implements, and evaluates their leadership project; it has become participatory action research. The Leadership Project demonstrates the students “leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions (per the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders) through the design, implementation, and evaluation of an educational program improvement initiative” (Purrington, 2009, p. 1). PAR, according to Purrington (2009), provides students with a conceptual and practical model for: (a) identifying a compelling program improvement need, (b) collaborating with others, (c) framing a study and action purpose, (d) developing research questions, (e) surfacing assumptions, (f) constructing an action plan, (g) taking action, (h) collecting and analyzing data, and (i) developing conclusions. Purrington explains that students engage in several cycles of PAR in their Leadership Projects where they participate in a four-step process in which they diagnose, act, measure, and reflect. Students also reflect upon their leadership practices and collaboration with others throughout their Leadership Project.

Forty-six ELA students from the 2008-2009 Pasadena and West Los Angeles (WLA) cohorts presented their Leadership Projects in a 20-minute media presentation, followed by a 15-minute interview with the faculty-graduate panel. In July 2009, these presentations were assessed and later analyzed for areas of strengths and areas needing

growth. Each student was rated on the degree to which each of the four PAR components was evident in his/her leadership project work and presentations. As a result of their findings, faculty decided to change the text in the Field Experience course strand to one that was geared towards educational leaders and contained information about how to plan and implement each component of PAR. Faculty also met during the fall term of 2009 to develop a deeper and shared understanding of PAR and how to integrate it with other ELA course work. Three of the four original student learning objectives were then selected for re-evaluation in July 2010 (Purrington, 2009).

In their ELA Annual Review Report (Purrington, 2009), GSEP reported the re-evaluation of the four student learning objectives to refine PAR. As a result of the review, Student Learning Objective #4 was eliminated and more focus was placed on data collection and methodology (Purrington, personal communication, November 3, 2010), which resulted in the following three SLOs to be assessed in 2009-2010:

- SLO #1 - ELA students will design Leadership Projects that are Inquiry-based PAR in approach. Students will be able to describe: the specific education issue under study, the study purpose (research and action outcomes), research questions, previous studies, variables that will be measured, local measurements, and forms of analysis.
- SLO#2 - ELA students will demonstrate their ability to collect, organize, interpret, and use data to inform Leadership Project PAR steps including: Diagnosis, Action, Measurement, and Reflection.
- SLO#3 - ELA students will articulate PAR Leadership Project outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations.

Upon yearly review and further evaluation the following year, GSEP's re-evaluation and focus on PAR focused on assisting students with data analysis and interpretation once students showed an overall understanding of both data collection and methodology (L. Purrington, personal communication, November 3, 2010). This resulted in the following modifications to the existing SLOs:

- SLO #1 - LA students will demonstrate their understanding of informal and formal reviews of literature to build a greater in-depth understanding of their PAR Leadership Project.
- SLO #2 - ELA students will demonstrate their understanding of informal and formal reviews of literature to build a greater in-depth understanding of their PAR Leadership Project.
- SLO #3 - ELA students will demonstrate their understanding of informal and formal reviews of literature to build a greater in-depth understanding of their PAR Leadership Project.

In 2010, the ELA Master of Science in Administration and Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Program, proposed a blended approach (60% face-to-face, 40% online) course structure (Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology [GSEP], 2008). The intent of this 60:40 blended program model was to broaden the pool of applicants for GSEP programs and expand the potential student applicant base for the scholar practitioner seeking multiple career objectives (Pepperdine University GSEP, 2008). GSEP was anticipating changes in the future that would address the needs of charter/alternative school leaders, in addition to traditional K-12 leaders. The initial 60:40 blended model of ELA was offered with 1 week in the first summer, one

weekend a month (Saturday and Sunday), and a final week at the end of 12 months (L. Purrington, personal communication, July 27, 2009). Purrington (personal communication, July 27, 2009) explained that the blended model would (a) better reflect research-based practices that point to the success of blended learning, (b) increase the circle from which ELA candidates could be recruited and to create cohorts even more diverse in terms of student background and experience, and (c) compete with other programs that are also developing blended and completely online programs.

According to Purrington (personal communication, September 23, 2009), in early 2009, Dr. Rumick and Dr. Purrington held an informal focus group meeting with ELA and Educational Leadership Administration and Policy (ELAP) doctoral program graduates in which new and aspiring school administrators discussed ideas to provide support for aspiring and new administrators after graduating from ELA. Graduates who participated in this discussion shared the challenges they faced adjusting to new roles as administrators and diversifying themselves to be administrators in elementary and secondary schools. Job opportunities and further training/academies were discussed as possible university support areas (L. Purrington, personal communication, September 23, 2009). New administrators also further shared that they would like to have ELA/ELAP support related to: changes in the culture of schools, legal and political issues, working with teachers, and handling difficult conversations and situations (L. Purrington, personal communication, September 23, 2009).

The face-to-face ELA program model has been discontinued and the 60:40 blended program model was launched in August 2010. SLO efforts continue to focus on PAR and more specifically, on data collection, analysis, and interpretation (L. Purrington,

personal communication, November 13, 2010). Internal WASC related efforts currently include: (a) directing programs to revise program and course objectives in the format of knowledge, skills, and dispositions categories to ensure that objectives are measurable; (b) identifying the relationship between SLOs and course products and performance; (c) identify assessment measures; and (d) aligning program SLOs with GSEP and University SLOs (L. Purrington, personal communication, November 13, 2010).

Graduate Student Program Satisfaction

Colleges and universities use a variety of survey methods to evaluate and assess student program satisfaction after graduation. From the 1930s to the 1980s, outcomes-based alumni surveys have gone from focusing on workforce issues and graduates' professional careers upon completing their degrees to investigating competencies that graduates acquired while in college (Cabrera, Weerts, & Zulick, 2005). Cabrera et al. (2005) explain that outcomes-based alumni surveys are the most established. Further, Cabrera et al. state that "the outcomes approach to alumni assessment rest on the assumption that institutional quality and effectiveness can be measured by monitoring what alumni have accomplished in the years following degree completion" (p. 6) as well as "examines collegiate experiences by assessing general satisfaction with the institution, the quality of instruction received, the extent to which the college prepared them for employment, and whether they would enroll again" (p. 6). The *Framework for Outcomes Assessment* (Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996) helps colleges and universities in Philadelphia meet the outcomes assessment requirements of the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, as outlined in *Characteristics of Excellence in*

Higher Education: Standards for Accreditation. The Framework for Outcomes Assessment states that the framework can also be used to “enable colleges and universities to respond to new expectation being expressed in public forums” and “select or develop the best instruments for measuring student academic achievement and personal development” (p. 1).

Few colleges and universities in the United States incorporate both alumni accomplishments after degree/program completion and general satisfaction with their program experiences. Using purposeful and strategic small sampling of public and private universities in Southern California, through Pepperdine professors personal acquaintances of leaders at these universities, it was found that most universities employ a general “in-house” created exit survey of their graduates to measure program satisfaction. Many universities want to know about graduate satisfaction with the program itself and to what degree the program met alumni satisfaction. These surveys are generally used for internal purposes to guide program improvement. Audiences of outcome-based alumni surveys are prospective students and parents *as well as* faculty and departmental leadership for the purpose of making curricular changes (Cabrera et al., 2005). Hoey and Gardner (1999) describe the need for valid and reliable indicators of institutional performance through their study of alumni and employer surveys. Hoey and Gardener explain that the basis for creating their alumni and employer survey was to assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that connect the academy to the world of work. It was found that alumni and employer surveys have been singled out as having the most believable and unbiased points of view and are viewed as the most valuable way of obtaining information for program improvement. Follow-up studies of graduates, years

after having received their certificates or degrees, are few and far between but provide valuable information for universities seeking to track graduate experiences following completion of their program of study.

Adult Student Priorities Surveys (ASPS) are often used to give institutions the opportunity to examine their graduates' priorities and identify what matters to them and how satisfied they are. This survey consists of eight scales that are analyzed statistically: academic advising effectiveness, academic services, admission and financial aid, campus climate, instructional effectiveness, registration effectiveness, safety and security, and service excellence (Noel-Levitz, 2010). In May 2010, students from GSEP programs were surveyed using the Noel-Levitz ASPS to describe expectations about their experiences and how satisfied they were. Although questions about overall satisfaction with their experiences were asked, including demographic information, follow-up questions pertaining to current career development and personal growth were nonexistent (L. Purrington, personal communication, April 15, 2010).

Pepperdine University's first follow-up study aimed to provide information about what graduates, who received the Master of Science degree in School Management and Administration (SMA) from August 1975 through August 1979, were doing professionally after graduation (Essang, 1981) and also sought to find the different jobs obtained by the SMA graduates following program completion. One follow-up study (Alemna, 1999) whose focus was the career development of former graduate students of the Department of Library and Archival Studies at the University of Ghana, showed a low rate of career mobility among librarians after graduation. Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), located in Nevada, performs yearly graduate follow-up

studies on its graduates (Truckee Meadows Community College [TMCC], 2002). TMCC's follow-up surveys collect demographic information, but more specific to career advancement, the employment section solicits information about job advancement upon graduating and new jobs upon graduating. Similarly, New Brunswick Community College (NBCC, 2009) compiles and analyzes information relating to the graduates' employment and additional education or training activities since graduation. Employment activities and labor force involvement of graduates of the New Brunswick Community College have been tracked on an annual basis since 1983. The New Brunswick study was also designed to "determine the relationship between the training program completed and employment positions held since graduation" (p. 2).

Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures

This chapter reviews the methodology that was used to conduct the research for this study. The purpose, research questions, research approach and design, participants of this study, human subject considerations, instrumentation, content validity, panel of experts, data collection, and data analysis will also be discussed.

Restatement of the Purpose

The primary purpose of this research was to study Pepperdine ELA graduates' perceptions about the impact of the ELA program on their subsequent (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth. The secondary purpose was to obtain their suggestions for improving the ELA program to better prepare graduates for (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth.

Restatement of Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in the study:

1. What perceived impact, if any, has the ELA program had on (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth of students who graduated from ELA from 2003-2006?
2. What suggestions, if any, do ELA program graduates from 2003-2006 have about improving the program overall and more specifically, with regards to (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth?

Research Approach and Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenological methodology to explore and describe the perceived impact of Pepperdine University's ELA program on ELA graduate's career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. The researcher

also solicited suggestions for ELA program improvement. To collect these data, a telephone interview was developed for this research study. The telephone interview (Appendix C) consisted of four background questions and six open-ended questions that took, on average, approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and was digitally recorded.

“The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and analyze individual’s collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 315). Unlike quantitative research, which lends itself to collecting data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data, qualitative research was more appropriate for this study in that it shows relationships between events and meanings as perceived and described by participants, which increases the understanding of the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2003), lends itself to self-reflective perspectives by the researcher. This study explored the self-described lived experiences of Pepperdine University’s ELA graduate program experiences as well as self-reflective experiences of the researcher. Phenomenological methodology was used to explore the essence of participants’ lived experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Phenomenological studies, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), “investigate what was experienced, how it was experienced, and finally the meanings that the interviewees assign to the experience” (p. 352). Moustakas (as cited in Creswell, 2003) states that phenomenological research involves studying a small number of subjects in order to understand their lived experiences and to develop patterns and relationships of meaning through extensive and prolonged engagement. The researcher can bracket her own experiences, explains Nieswiadomy (as cited in Creswell, 2003), to

understand participants. It was the intent of the researcher to identify what Creswell (2003) describes as the *essence* of human experiences using phenomenological research.

Subjects were asked 10 questions during a digitally recorded telephone interview. The first four questions asked the subject about what campus he/she graduated from, the year he/she graduated, what job/positions he/she has served in since graduation, and his/her current job/position. The next six questions asked the subject to reflect on his/her experiences in the ELA program pertaining to career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth, as well as solicit ELA program improvement suggestions.

Phenomenological interviews, a specific type of in-depth interview used to study the meanings or essence of a lived experience, were used to investigate what was experienced, how it was experienced, and the meaning the interviewees assigned to the experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Participants of the Study

The study population pool was 236 former ELA graduate students who graduated from Pepperdine University's ELA program from July 2003 through July 2006, received their Master's degree in Administration, and who became eligible for a California Administrative Services Credential as a result of their completion of the ELA program. Because of the relatively small size of this population, purposeful sampling of subjects was used and therefore all of the 236 graduates from this specific time frame were recruited for participation in the study. Graduates from July 2003-July 2006 were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Thirty graduates participated in this study.

In order to collect data, the researcher began by sending out an introductory email invitation letter (Appendix D) with the assistance of Pepperdine University's Alumni Services, requesting participation in the telephone interview (Appendix E). After a low response rate, a second subject recruitment strategy was used. The researcher attempted to connect with targeted ELA alumni by: (a) communicating with ELA field experience supervisors to assist in contacting ELA alumni; (b) communicating with ELA leader-type students from each of the cohorts to assist in contacting fellow ELA alumni; (c) using Pepperdine University's online alumni network (PAN) to search for ELA alumni in order to reach them by phone, email, or home address; and (d) using social media/networking such as Facebook to search for and contact ELA alumni. Once the telephone interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed each digitally recorded interview for data analysis.

Human Subjects Considerations

On February 3, 2011, the researcher successfully completed the Human Subjects Protection for Research Teams. This online training is provided by The National Institutes of Health and certifies that the researcher will comply with all human subjects protection requirements throughout the duration of this study. Permission from Pepperdine University to conduct the study was granted by Dr. Margaret Weber, Dean of the GSEP (Appendix D). Additionally, authorization from Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was sought. Because of the minimal risk to the study participants, the researcher requested an exempt research review from the IRB.

ELA graduates were sent an introductory emailed invitation letter (Appendix E) requesting participation in this study through Pepperdine University's Alumni Services.

This introductory email invitation to participate in this research study reviewed the study, summarized what participation in the study would involve, and included a link to the Zoomerang online survey (Appendix F). If the ELA graduate was interested in participating in the study, he/she was directed to click on this link. Once the ELA graduate clicked on the link from the emailed invitation letter, he/she was directed to the online survey. The purpose of the online survey was to provide information regarding: (a) an overview of the study, (b) the voluntary nature of participation in the study and the nature of protection as a human subject in this study, (c) their option to decline or accept participation in the study and to give their informed consent should they choose to participate, (d) an opportunity to participate in the raffle for a \$100 Target e-gift card as an incentive for completing the telephone interview, and (e) how they could request a copy of the study findings. The online survey also requested participant contact information and telephone interview date availability.

Subjects were able to withdraw from participation in the study at any time simply by closing the Zoomerang tool and or by stating during the telephone interview that they would like to discontinue their participation. An email reminder was sent to ELA graduates who did not respond 1 week after the initial email invitation had been sent. Telephone interview appointments were emailed as well. Once the telephone interview date was established and confirmed, the researcher conducted the digitally recorded 20-minute telephone interview consisting of 10 questions. The researcher also took notes during the telephone interview in case of recording equipment failure.

Instrumentation

Data collection in this study involved a telephone interview consisting of 10 questions (Appendix C). Participants were also asked standardized open-ended questions; the same questions were asked in the same order for each participant (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Questions 1 and 2 were background questions that asked which campus the graduate attended and the year he/she graduated. Questions 3 and 4 asked information about current and past career/job positions ELA graduates have served in since graduation and their current job title/position. Several studies have used questionnaires to study the career development or career mobility of graduates several years after program completion (Alemna, 1999; NBCC, 2009; TMCC, 2002). Questions 5-10 were open-ended. Questions 5 asked the subject why they chose Pepperdine University and the ELA program. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) advise that qualitative interviewing not only require asking truly open-ended questions, the questions should be sequenced to include “interview probes, statements of the researcher’s purpose and focus, ordering of questions, demographic questions, and complex, controversial, and difficult questions reserved for middle or later periods in the interview” (p. 354). Follow-up questions, or interview probes, can be used to “elicit elaboration of detail, further explanations, and clarification of responses” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 354) and should be reduced to a few words during the interview. After reviewing the interview data, the researcher had the ability to re-contact the interviewee. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2003) states that one advantage of using telephone interviews is being about to re-contact the subject after the interview for any clarifications. The researcher recommended, in future practice, to create follow-up probing questions

beforehand to assist in data collection, in order to gather more detailed answers and explanations. Although the researcher considered creating follow-up probing questions in advance, the researcher took into consideration the necessity of the telephone interview to be under 20 minutes long as there were 10 open-ended questions that were asked.

Questions 6 through 8 asked the subject how his/her career has advanced and enhanced after completion of the ELA program, and how his/her personal growth was enhanced upon completion of the ELA program. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state the importance of developing interview questions that focus on the interviewees' experiences, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory perceptions, and backgrounds. NBCC's 2009 survey was designed to gather pertinent information related to graduates' experiences over the 3-year period following completion of their program of study at NBCC. Question 9 asked the subject what the strengths of the ELA program were and what improvements they might suggest to improve the ELA program. The Noel-Levitz ASPS (2010) is often used to obtain program satisfaction on a Likert scale and also asks how the program can be improved. Question 10 asked the subject if he/she would like to add or elaborate on anything they had commented on in the previous nine questions. Table 1 summarizes the relationship between the survey questions and research questions.

Table 1

Survey and Research Questions

| Research Question | Survey Questions |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 3-8 |
| 2 | 9-10 |

Instrument Credibility

In order to ensure the credibility of the interview protocol, an invitation was sent to a panel of three experts via email to review and comment on this instrument. Included with this correspondence was an explanation of the study, research questions addressed in this study, the questionnaire instrument, and a request for recommended modifications. The panel of experts consisted of three individuals knowledgeable in educational leadership in California. The first panel expert was a university doctoral program professor in an organizational leadership program and a former K-12 district administrator. The second panel expert was a university doctoral program professor in an organizational leadership program and a former assistant superintendent of educational programs. The third panel expert was a university professor in a teacher credentialing program and a former school administrator. The experts were specifically asked to review the interview question content. The expert panel was given the explanation of the study and the list of research questions before reviewing the interview questions. Each expert was asked to read and rank each question on a response form in one of three categories: (a) Valid/Needs No Modification, (b) Irrelevant/Delete, or (c) Valid/Needs Modification. If any question was ranked in the third category and needed modification, experts were asked to provide a suggestion regarding how the question could be modified. When at least two of the panel members agreed that a question was valid and did not need modification, the question was accepted with no modification made.

The telephone interview instrument was modified based on expert feedback. Question 5 was rephrased to make the question more specific about why graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University and why they enrolled in the ELA program. The words

reasons and *goals* were omitted from the original phrasing. Questions 6-8 were modified to make the language more specific and to follow the order of the research questions. Questions 6-9 were condensed to make the questions more specific to the order of the research questions.

Pilot Study

In order to ensure greater trustworthiness of the telephone interview protocol, a pilot study was conducted prior to the commencement of the research. Three ELA graduates from graduating years 2008-2009 were asked to participate in the telephone interview and asked to provide their input on the telephone interview questions and protocol. The three telephone interviews ranged from 7-15 minutes. The instrument was piloted to ensure that questions: were aligned with the research questions of this study, well designed, were expressed in language that could be easily understood by respondents, were accompanied by clear directions, and could be completed via phone interview in 20 minutes or less. The projected time for completing the telephone interview, 20 minutes, was deemed to be reasonable. Interviewee feedback was positive and no changes were suggested. The data collected in the pilot study were not included in to the results of the research study.

Data Collection

Data were collected in the following ways:

- With the assistance of Pepperdine University's Alumni Services, ELA graduates were sent an introductory email (Appendix E) inviting them to participate in the research study. ELA graduate email addresses were kept private and confidential by Alumni Services and were not shared with the

researcher. Personal email addresses of fellow ELA graduates who graduated in 2005 that the researcher had kept were used for contact information if Alumni Services did have their contact information.

- The researcher and her dissertation committee members connected with ELA field experience supervisors from graduating years 2003-2006 to assist in contacting ELA alumni to participate in the study.
- The researcher and her dissertation committee members connected with ELA leader-type students from each of the cohorts to assist in contacting fellow ELA alumni from each of the cohorts to request their participation in the study.
- The researcher used Pepperdine University's PAN Online search engine to locate and contact ELA alumni from graduating years 2003-2006. The researcher contacted ELA alumni using contact information such as telephone numbers, email addresses, and home addresses. The researcher used telephone numbers to call alumni to ask if they would like to participate in the study by introducing the study and summarizing what their participation would involve (see Appendix G). The researcher mailed the informed consent paperwork, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, using the prospective participant's home address.
- The researcher used social media, such as Facebook, to locate and contact ELA alumni to request their participation in the study.
- The researcher used Zoomerang, an online survey service, to gather informed consent, contact information, and telephone interview scheduling dates and

times. ELA alumni who clicked *agree* and gave their informed consent through the Zoomerang online survey instrument (Appendix F) and agreed to participate in the study were also given the option to download, print, sign, and return a hard copy of their informed consent to the researcher's personal address.

- Subjects were called on the date and time scheduled. The telephone interview (Appendix C) consisted of 10 questions, lasted approximately 10-15 minutes, and was digitally recorded. The digital file of the recorded interview and typed transcripts were stored on the researchers computer.

The results of each survey and the names of the individuals who completed the survey were kept confidential and private by the researcher. Requested contact information from participants was used solely for the purposes of scheduling and confirming telephone interviews, email reminders for participation in the study, emailing the winner of the raffle, and sending requested copies of research findings.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involves “preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2003, p. 190). Creswell (2003) recommends following generic steps with specific research design steps in the analysis of qualitative data.

- Step 1 – The first step in the data analysis process is organizing and preparing the data (Creswell, 2003). The responses to open-ended telephone interview questions and handwritten notes by the researcher were transcribed for every

subject in this study. After each interview was transcribed, the researcher began the process of reading each response and gathering the overall meaning.

- Step 2 – The second step is getting a general sense of the information to reflect its overall meaning (Creswell, 2003). The researcher read through all of the data to get the general ideas that the subjects were expressing. The researcher also wrote notes in the margins to record general thoughts about the data.
- Step 3 – The third step marks the beginning of detailed analysis with a coding process (Creswell, 2003). Coding, according to Rossman and Rallis (as cited in Creswell, 2003), involves organizing data into *chunks* before bringing meaning to those chunks. It also involves taking text data, segmenting sentences or paragraphs into categories, and labeling those categories. Creswell (2003) recommends analyzing the “data for material that can yield codes that address topics that the readers would expect to find, codes that are surprising, and codes that address a larger theoretical perspective in the research” (p. 193). The researcher categorized and coded by identifying relevant statements and their frequency using color-coding for different categories on the transcripts. After each response was color-coded, each category of response was given an identifying label (i.e. number or letter), and each response was recorded for each subject. The researcher approached several doctoral graduates who had experience with coding and asked them to perform the same coding to compare the results and check for differences of opinion.

- Step 4 – The fourth step is the use of the coding process to generate a description of the people and categories/themes in the study (Creswell, 2003). Creswell (2003) recommends the use of five to seven themes or categories that display multiple perspectives that can create additional layers for a more complex analysis and thematic connection.
- Step 5 – The fifth step involves the use of tables, visuals, figures, and discussions to represent the advancement of the descriptions and themes in the study (Creswell, 2003). The researcher analyzed and reported on the data for the whole subject population as well as by program location and year of graduation for each of the research questions.
- Step 6 – The final step of data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data. Lessons learned using the researcher’s interpretation, comparisons of the findings, and questions raised by the data and analysis are all ways of making sense of and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2003). The researcher analyzed and interpreted data using frequency of responses, commonalities of responses, observation of gaps of information in interview responses, and patterns among responses. The researcher disaggregated the data based on the entire subject group as a whole and then analyzed the data for frequency of response, common themes, and patterns. The researcher also performed a similar data analysis based on program location and then year of graduation. A qualitative narrative was then written.

Background information was used to note any resulting perceptions that may have related to the ELA program location participants attended, the year of graduation, and

employment category, in addition to analyzing data as a collective group. A Greek letter coding system was used. Alpha represented one campus and Beta the other campus. Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, and Zeta were used to represent the four graduation years and numbers were used to code subjects. So for example, a subject's response might be coded for analysis by the researcher as Alpha.Gamma. Alpha.Epsilon would be added to indicate subject 1, so Alpha.Epsilon.1; another graduate from same campus and year would be Alpha.Epsilon.2 and so forth.

Table 2

Initial Coding of Subjects

| Campus | Year of Graduation | Subject Number |
|--------|--------------------|----------------|
| Alpha | Epsilon | 1 |
| Alpha | Gamma | 2 |
| Alpha | Zeta | 3 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 4 |
| Alpha | Zeta | 5 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 6 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 7 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 8 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 9 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 10 |
| Alpha | Zeta | 11 |
| Alpha | Epsilon | 12 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 1 |
| Beta | Zeta | 2 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 3 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 4 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 5 |
| Beta | Gamma | 6 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 7 |
| Beta | Delta | 8 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 9 |
| Beta | Gamma | 10 |
| Beta | Zeta | 11 |
| Beta | Gamma | 12 |
| Beta | Gamma | 13 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 14 |
| Beta | Zeta | 15 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 16 |
| Beta | Gamma | 17 |
| Beta | Epsilon | 18 |

Chapter 4: Results of the Study

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this phenomenological research was to describe Pepperdine ELA 2003-2006 graduates' perceptions about the impact of the ELA program on their subsequent career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. The secondary purpose was to obtain these graduates' suggestions for improving the ELA program to better prepare future graduates for career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth.

Restatement of Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What perceived impact, if any, has the ELA program had on (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth of students who graduated from ELA from 2003-2006?
2. What suggestions, if any, do ELA program graduates from 2003-2006 have about improving the program overall and more specifically, with regards to (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth?

Review of Research Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenological methodology to explore and describe the perceived impact of Pepperdine University's ELA program on ELA graduates' career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. The researcher collected interview data from 30 students selected from an eligible pool of 236 students who: graduated from Pepperdine University's ELA program from July 2003 through July 2006, received their Master's degree in Administration, and became eligible for a

California Administrative Services Credential as a result of their completion of the ELA program.

The telephone interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions. Telephone interview questions 1-2 were used as demographic questions to find out what program location respondents graduated from and what year they graduated. Telephone interview questions 3-8 were used to address research question 1 and related to career advancement, career advancement, and personal growth. Telephone interview questions 9-10 were used to address research question 2 and were related to ELA program improvement recommendations. Demographic information was reported to provide a profile for the subject population. Data were then analyzed and reported for the whole subject population as well as by program location and year of graduation for each of the research questions.

In order to collect data, the researcher began by sending out an introductory email invitation letter (Appendix D) with the assistance of Pepperdine University's Alumni Services, requesting participation in the telephone interview (Appendix E). After a low response rate resulted from this strategy, a second subject recruitment strategy was used. The researcher attempted to connect with targeted ELA alumni by (a) communicating with ELA field experience supervisors to assist in contacting ELA alumni; (b) communicating with ELA leader-type students from each of the cohorts to assist in contacting fellow ELA alumni; (c) using Pepperdine University's PAN Online to search for ELA alumni to reach them by phone, email, or home address; and (d) using social media/networking such as Facebook to search for and contact ELA alumni. Once the

telephone interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed each digitally recorded interview for data analysis.

Efforts to Recruit Subjects

The researcher was initially given IRB approval to contact ELA alumni only with the assistance of Pepperdine University's Alumni Services' email system. This process involved creating an introductory email invitation to participate (Appendix E) that Alumni Services emailed to ELA alumni. This initial email blast, including a reminder to participate that was sent out 1 week later, resulted in a one participant. After a low response rate, a second subject recruitment strategy was used. The researcher attempted to connect with targeted ELA alumni by (a) communicating with ELA field experience supervisors to assist in contacting ELA alumni; (b) communicating with ELA leader-type students from each of the cohorts to assist in contacting fellow ELA alumni; (c) using Pepperdine University's PAN Online to search for ELA alumni to reach them by phone, email, or home address; and (d) using social media/networking such as Facebook to search for and contact ELA alumni.

The researcher found that using a combination of PAN Online and social networking resulted in a higher response rate. The researcher used PAN Online, a networking system created to assist Pepperdine students to connect with classmates and strengthen networking. The researcher searched for ELA alumni who graduated between 2003 through 2006. A majority of the students in the database had incomplete records. Student email addresses were missing or, as the researcher later found out, were not updated. Many of the alumni who were contacted stated to the researcher that they simply ignored and deleted the initial email invitation without reading it because it came from

Pepperdine and or Alumni Services. Home addresses were left blank and many telephone numbers were either blank or out of service. The researcher used the existing telephone numbers and email addresses to send email invitations to participate in the study. A telephone contact introductory transcript (Appendix G) was used when contacting alumni. The researcher discovered that many of the alumni who were willing to participate agreed because: (a) the researcher was a fellow Pepperdine alumna, (b) they were sympathetic and could relate to the difficulty involved in trying to find participants because they had also gone through a similar process, or (c) they were familiar with the researcher.

The researcher graduated in 2005 and 8 out of 30 (27%) student participants were classmates of the researcher. The researcher was able to contact her fellow classmates through Facebook and ask for their help. Many of the classmates the researcher contacted were a combination of individuals with whom she was Facebook friends and others to whom she had not spoken since graduation. After the telephone interviews had taken place, casual conversations took place in which subjects asked the researcher about her experience in the doctoral process and how they could be of any more help to the researcher. Many of these alumni, including alumni from other graduating years with whom the researcher was not acquainted, offered to assist in recruiting more participants by contacting their fellow classmates. Word of mouth was a big factor in recruiting for telephone interviews. The researcher believes that the telephone interview process adds a personal touch to the study, a factor that is missing in Likert-scale questionnaires.

When the researcher was able to speak with a graduate, the graduate agreed to be interviewed and gave the researcher an updated email address to forward the consent

form and to schedule possible interview days and times. All of the graduates who agreed to participate followed through with signing the consent form via Zoomerang and scheduled and participated in their telephone interview. One graduate who was contacted via telephone stated that she would have liked to participate in the interview had she not been so busy. The study invitation was initially sent at the beginning of June 2011. This is a busy time of the school year for individuals who work in the education field. The second recruitment began in July 2011 when most of the individuals who work in the education field were on vacation.

Graduate Campus Location Findings

Interview question 1 findings. Interview question 1 asked: What campus did you graduate from? The ELA program was offered in two California locations during the 2003-2006 academic years: Irvine and WLA. WLA ELA program cohort numbers have typically been larger than Irvine ELA cohort numbers due to the number and size of the cohorts. Table 3 represents the findings from interview question one: the number of cohorts offered and students enrolled at each program location from 2003-2006.

Table 3

2003-2006 ELA Cohorts Offered and Students Enrolled

| Year and Program Location | Cohorts Offered | Students Enrolled |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 2003 | Irvine | 1 |
| | WLA | 2 |
| 2004 | Irvine | 1 |
| | WLA | 2 |
| 2005 | Irvine | 1 |
| | WLA | 1 |
| 2006 | Irvine | 2 |
| | WLA | 2 |
| Total | | 12 |
| | | 236 |

Note. 89 students were enrolled at the Irvine program location and 147 students were enrolled at the WLA program location.

During the 2003-2006 timeframe, five cohorts were offered at the Irvine program location with a total of 89 students enrolled; seven cohorts were offered at the WLA location with a total of 147 students enrolled. From 2003-2006, a total of 12 cohorts were offered and a total of 236 students were enrolled. Table 4 represents the number of ELA cohorts offered and the number of graduates who participated in this study by year of graduation and program location.

Table 4

2003-2006 ELA Cohorts Offered and Graduate Participants

| Year and Program Location | | Cohorts Offered | Graduate Participants |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 2003 | Irvine | 1 | 1 |
| | WLA | 2 | 5 |
| 2004 | Irvine | 1 | 0 |
| | WLA | 2 | 1 |
| 2005 | Irvine | 1 | 8 |
| | WLA | 1 | 9 |
| 2006 | Irvine | 2 | 3 |
| | WLA | 2 | 3 |
| Total | | 12 | 30 |

Figure 1 represents the program location of the 30 ELA graduates who participated in this study and was developed from the findings in response to interview question 1. Twelve out of 30 (40%) respondents in this study graduated from the Irvine program location. Eighteen out of 30 (60%) respondents graduated from the WLA program location. Twelve Irvine respondents represented 13.48% of the targeted Irvine subject population. Eighteen WLA respondents represented 12.24% of the targeted WLA subject population. Graduates from both program locations represent 12.71% of the total targeted subject population. Although telephone interviews are easy to administer, fast, and can be used in almost all research situations, research indicates “response rates for

telephone surveys can be below 70% even in extremely well designed surveys” (EPA, 2003, p. 26).

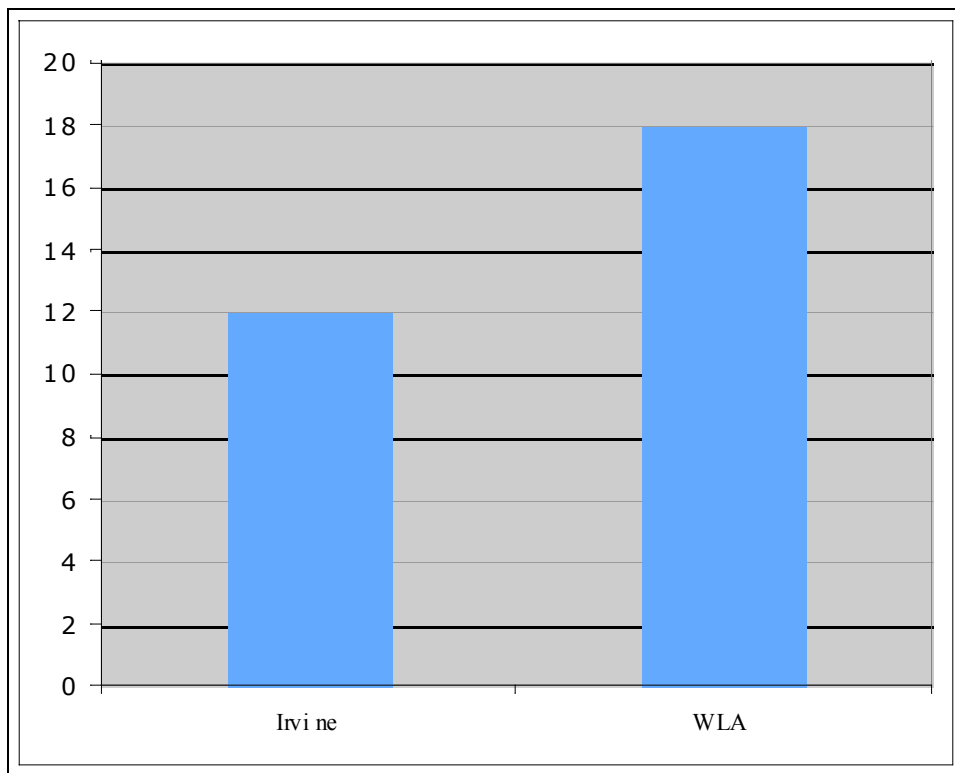


Figure 1. Program location of the 30 ELA study graduates.

ELA Year of Graduation

Interview question 2 findings. Interview question 2 asked: What year did you graduate? This study was delimited to four graduation years: 2003-2006. Figure 2 presents the results of interview question 2, illustrating the graduation years of the 30 ELA graduates who participated in this study by program location and year of graduation.

Six out of 30 (20%) respondents graduated in 2003, 1 out of 30 (3.33%) respondents graduated in 2004, 17 out of 30 (56.66%) respondents graduated in 2005, and 6 out of 30 (20%) respondents graduated in 2006. Overall responses to this study for 2003 represented 9.52% of the 2003 graduating class, responses for 2004 represented 1.53% of the 2004 graduating class, responses for 2005 represented 39.53% of the 2005

graduating class, and responses for 2006 represented 9.23% of the 2006 graduating class.

Graduate groups that yielded more responses include graduating years 2005 and 2006.

These groups were contacted for this study 5-6 years after having graduated.

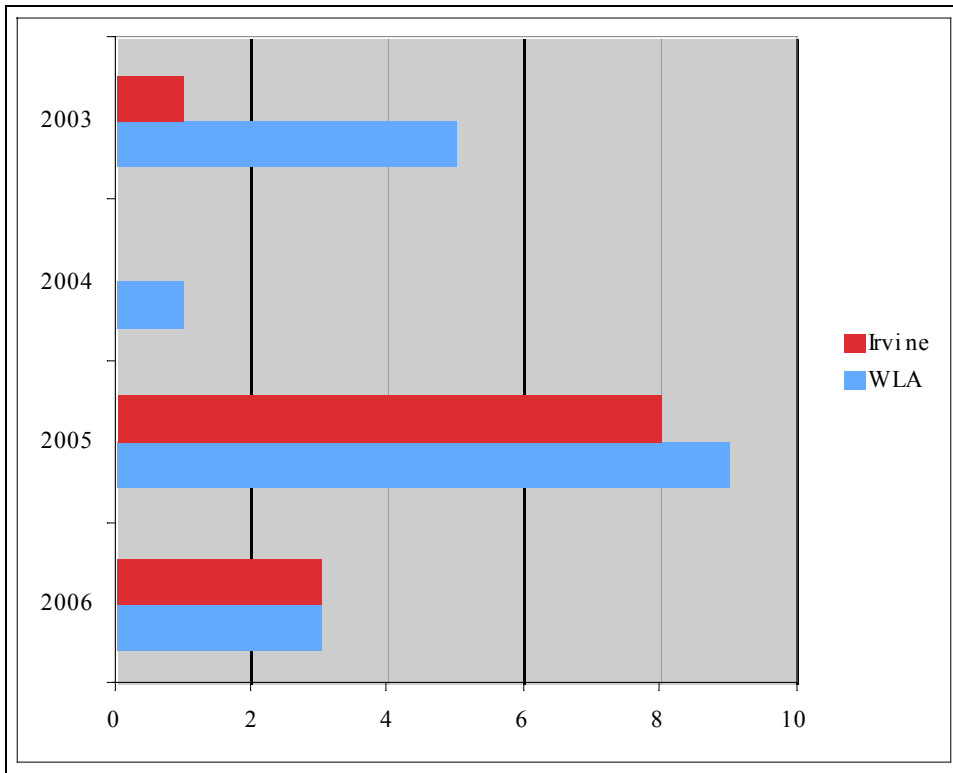


Figure 2. Respondents by program location and graduation year.

Research Question 1 Findings

Research question 1 asked: What perceived impact, if any, has the ELA program had on (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth of students who graduated from ELA from 2003-2006? Participant responses to qualitative interview questions 3-8 were used to answer research question 1.

Interview question 3 findings. Interview question 3 included two parts, asking: What positions have you served in since graduation? Did any of these positions require an Administrative Services Credential? Table H1 in Appendix H shows the findings of

interview question one, enumerating the positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates have served since their graduation by program location and graduation year.

The greatest concentration of 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses regarding positions served in since graduation related to School Site positions (77.27%).

Administrative School Site positions, with a total of 27 (40.90%) responses, had the greatest overall response. Examples of Administrative School Site positions included:

Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Principal, Associate Principal, House Principal, Department Chairperson, Dean of Students, Administrative Intern/Designee, and

Founding Director. Non-Administrative School Site positions, with a total of 24 (36.36%) responses, included: general education teacher, curriculum specialist, coordinator,

literacy coach, math coach, instructional coach, program facilitator, program advisor, and TOSA. Mid-range responses, overall, related to having served in District positions

(18.18%). District Administrative positions, with a total of 11 (16.66%) responses, included: Implementation Consultant/Manager, curriculum specialist, district coordinator, District Title 1 Coordinator, program coordinator, and Service Learning Coordinator.

District Non-Administrative positions, with a total of one (1.51%) response, included a New Teacher Advisor/Consultant position. The smallest concentration of responses

overall related to having served in Non-Education positions (4.54%), with a total of three (4.54%) responses for Non-Administrative positions, which included: corporate trainer,

consultant, and international consultant positions.

Twelve Irvine program location respondents served in 27 positions since graduation. The greatest concentration of responses of 2003-2006 ELA Irvine program location graduate responses included School Site positions with a total of 12 (44.44%)

School Site Administrative positions and a total of 10 (37.03%) School Site Non-Administrative positions. The smallest concentration of responses related to District positions with a total of five (18.51%) District Administrative positions.

Eighteen WLA program location respondents served in 39 positions since graduation. The greatest concentration of responses of 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses at the WLA program location related to School Site positions with a total of 15 (38.46%) School Site Administrative positions and a total of 14 (35.89%) School Site Non-Administrative positions. Mid-range concentration of responses related to District positions with a total of six (15.38%) District Administrative positions and a total of one (2.56%) District Non-Administrative positions. The smallest concentration of responses related to Non-Education positions with a total of three (7.69%) Non-Education Non-Administrative positions.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses in 2003 related to School Site positions with a total of 12 (85.71%) responses. Mid-range responses related to Non-Education positions with a total of three (21.42%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to District positions with a total of two (14.28%) responses.

Overall, the two (100%) responses in 2004 related to School Site Non-Administrative positions. One position was a Categorical Program Advisor. The other was an Instructional Coach position.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses in 2005 related to School Site positions with a total of 29 (90.62%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to District positions with a total of three (9.37%) responses.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses in 2006 related to School Site positions with a total of eight (53.33%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to District positions with a total of seven (46.66%) responses.

The second part of interview question 3 asked: Did any of these positions require an Administrative Credential? Figure 3 illustrates the findings from this part of interview question 3, representing the requirement of an Administrative Services Credential for positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates have served in since their graduation.

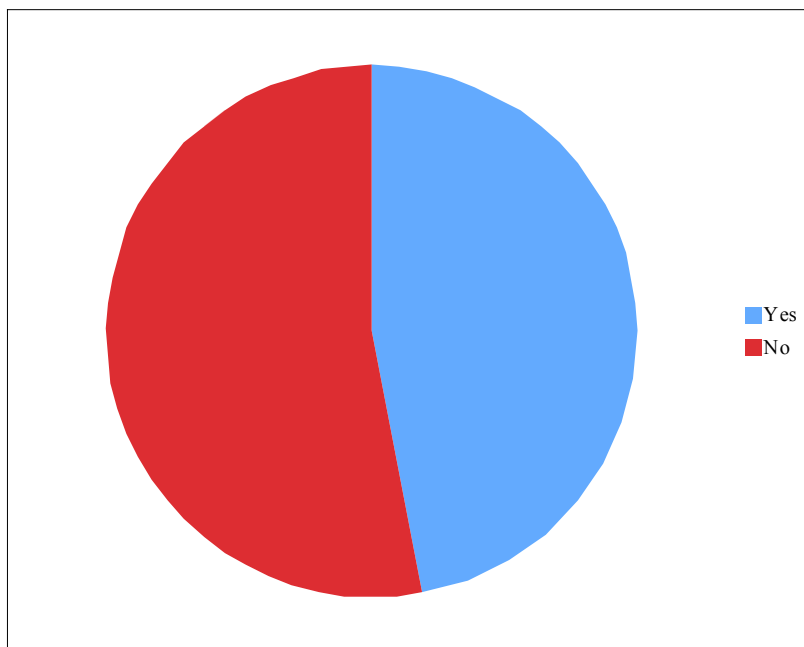


Figure 3. Administrative services credential required in positions served in since graduation. *Note.* A number of respondents reported as having served in more than one position since their graduation and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the figure is more than 30.

Overall, for both Irvine and WLA program locations, 31 (46.96%) positions in which graduates served since graduation required an Administrative Services Credential, while 35 (53.03%) positions did not. Figure 4 shows additional findings from the second part of interview question 3, illustrating the requirement of an Administrative Services

Credential for positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates have served since their graduation by program location.

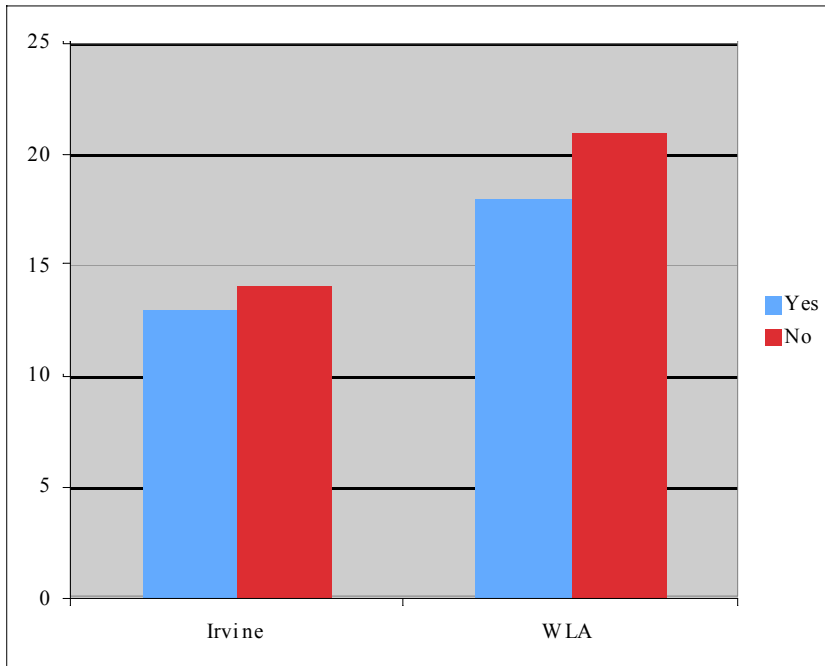


Figure 4. Administrative services credential required in positions served by program location. *Note.* A number of respondents reported as having served in more than one position since their graduation and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the figure is more than 30.

Overall, 13 (48.14%) out of 27 positions that Irvine graduates stated they served in required an Administrative Services Credential, while 14 (51.85%) positions did not.

Overall, 18 (46.15%) out of 39 positions that WLA students stated they served in required an Administrative Services Credential, while 21 (53.84%) positions did not.

Figure 5 illustrates the findings in response to interview question 3, showing the requirement of an Administrative Services Credential for positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates have served since their graduation by program location and year of graduation .

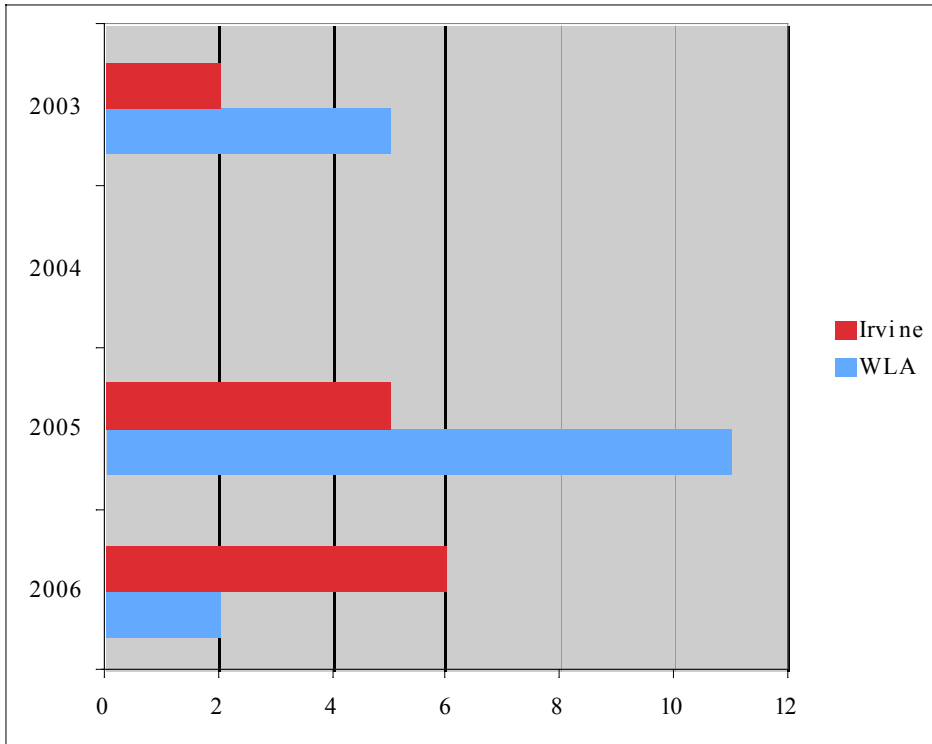


Figure 5. Administrative services credential required in positions served by program location and year of graduation. Note. A number of respondents reported as having served in more than one position since their graduation and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the figure is more than 30.

Overall, in 2003, seven (41.17%) positions that graduates stated they served in required an Administrative Services Credential while 10 (58.82%) positions did not. In 2004, three (100%) positions that graduates stated they served in required an Administrative Services Credential. In 2005, 16 (50%) positions that graduates stated they served in required an Administrative Services Credential, while 16 (50%) positions did not. In 2006, eight (53.33%) positions that graduates stated they served in required an Administrative Services Credential, while seven (46.66%) positions did not.

Interview question 4 findings. Interview question 4 included two parts, asking: What is your current position and or job title? Does this position require and Administrative Services Credential? Table II in Appendix I shows the findings in

response to interview question 4, presenting the positions in which 2003-2006 ELA are currently serving by program location and graduation year .

The greatest concentration of responses of 2003-2006 ELA graduate positions currently serving in related to School Site positions (80%) with 13 (43.33%) responses for School Site Non-Administrative positions and 11 (36.66%) responses for School Site Administrative positions. The School Site Administrative job titles/positions included: Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Principal, House Principal, Specialist Teacher/Designee, Founding Director, and Director of Communications positions. Among the School Site Non-Administrative job titles/positions stated were: Coordinator, Title 1 Coordinator, and Elementary and Middle School Teachers. The smallest concentration of responses related to Non-Education positions, District positions, and Unemployment. Non-Education Administrative positions received two (6.66%) responses. Examples included Co-Founder and Training and Development Supervisor. District Administrative positions stated, for which two (6.66%) responses were received, were Beginning Teacher and Support Assessment (BTSA) Coordinator and District Title 1 Coordinator. Unemployment also received two (6.66%) responses. Reasons for unemployment were resignation (Irvine program location) and being laid off (WLA program location).

The greatest concentration of responses at the Irvine program location pertaining to the positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates are currently serving related to School Site positions. School Site Administrative positions received five (41.66%) responses while and School Site Non-Administrative positions received four (33.33%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to District Administrative

positions with two (16.66%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to Unemployment with one (8.33%) response.

The greatest concentration of responses at the WLA program location pertaining to the positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates are currently serving related to School Site positions. School Site Non-Administrative positions received eight (44.44%) responses and School Site Administrative positions received seven (38.88%) responses. Mid-range responses related to Non-Education positions. Non-Education Administrative positions received two (11.11%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to Unemployment with one (5.55%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses in 2003 related to School Site positions with four (66.66%) responses total for Schools Site Administrative positions and one (16.66%) response total for School Site Non-Administrative positions. The smallest concentration of responses related to Non-Education positions, with a total of one (16.66%) response for Non-Education Administrative positions.

The one (100%) response in 2004 related to a School Site Non-Administrative position.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses in 2005 related to School Site positions, with a total of eight (47.05%) School Site Non-Administrative position responses and six (35.29%) School Site Administrative position responses. Mid-range responses related to unemployment, with a total of two (11.76%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to District positions, with a total of one (5.88%) District Administrative position response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses in 2006 related to School Site positions, with a total of three (50%) School Site Administrative position responses and one (16.66%) School Site Non-Administrative response. The smallest concentration of responses related to District positions and Non-Education positions. District Administrative positions received one (16.66%) response and Non-Education Administrative positions received one (16.66%) response.

The second part of question 4 asked: Does this position require and Administrative Services Credential? Figure 6 presents the findings in response to interview question 4, illustrating the requirement of an Administrative Services Credential for positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates are currently serving.

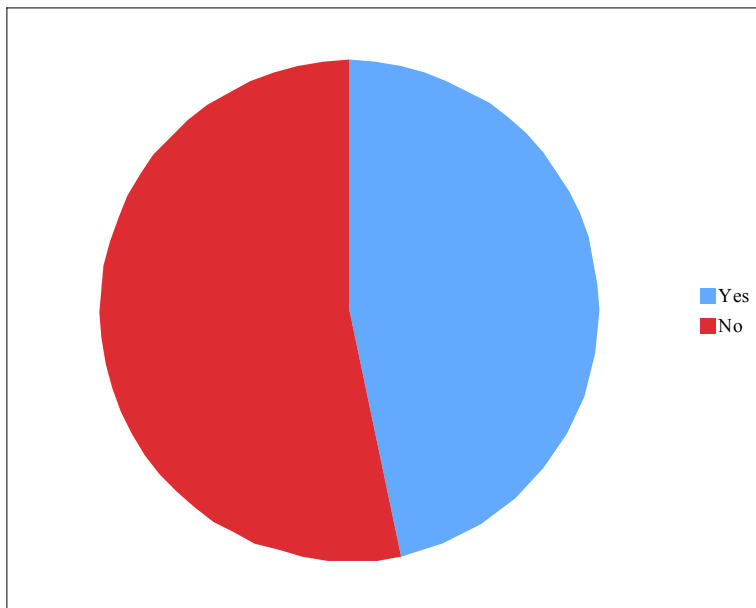


Figure 6. Requirement of administrative services credential in current 2003-2006 ELA graduate positions. *Note.* This figure represents two Unemployment graduate responses that are included as not requiring an Administrative Services Credential.

Overall, 2003-2006 ELA graduates reported serving in 14 (46.66%) positions that required an Administrative Services Credential and 16 (53.33%) positions that did not.

Figure 7 presents the findings in response to interview question 4, showing the

requirement of an Administrative Services Credential for positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates are currently serving by program location.

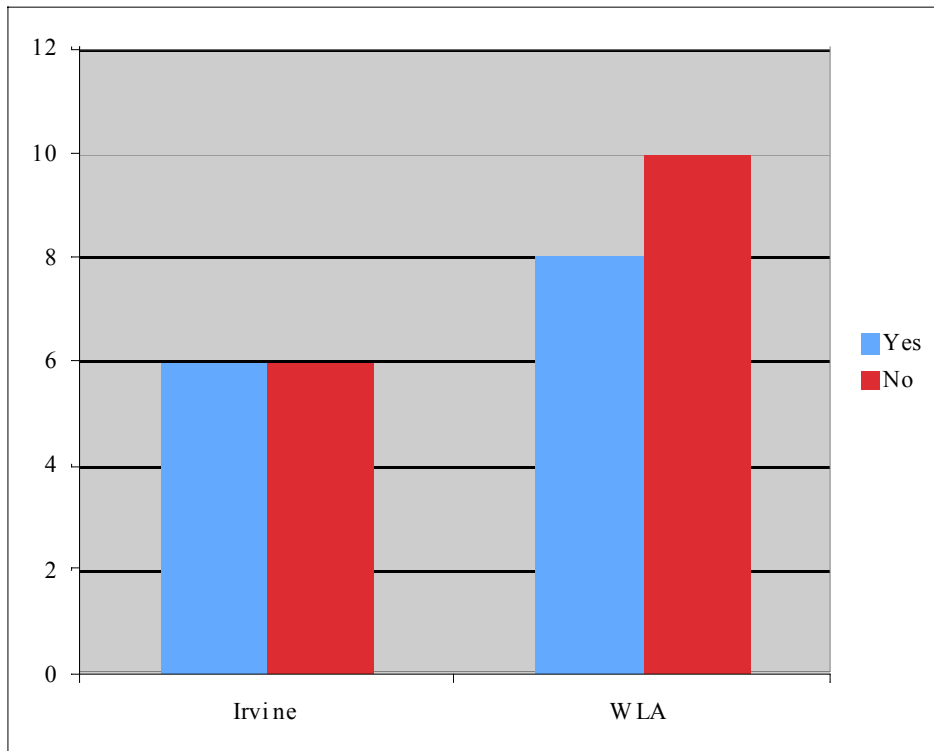


Figure 7. Requirement of administrative services credential in current 2003-2006 ELA graduate positions by program location. *Note.* Responses ($N=30$). This figure represents two Unemployment graduate responses that are included as “No” responses.

Overall, at the Irvine program location, six (50%) positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates were currently serving required an Administrative Services Credential and six (50%) positions did not. Overall, at the WLA program, eight (44.44%) positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates were currently serving required an Administrative Services Credential while 10 (55.55%) positions did not. Figure 8 presents the findings in response to interview question 4, showing the requirement of an Administrative Services Credential for positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates are currently serving by year of graduation.

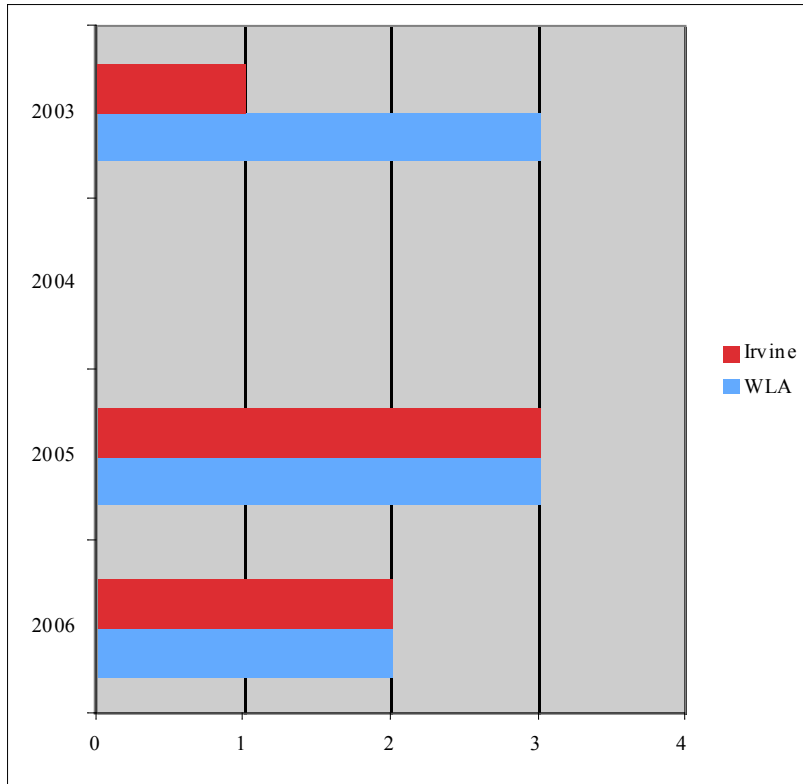


Figure 8. Positions requiring the administrative services credential.

Among the 2003 graduates, four (66.66%) positions in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates stated they were currently serving required an Administrative Services Credential while two (33.33%) did not. Among the 2004 graduates, one (100%) position did not require an Administrative Services Credential. Among the 2005 graduates, six (35.29%) positions required an Administrative Services Credential while 11 (64.70%) positions did not. In 2006, four (66.66%) positions required an Administrative Services Credential while two (33.33%) positions did not.

Interview question 5 findings. Interview question 5 included two parts, asking: Why did you choose to attend Pepperdine University? Why did you enroll in the ELA program? Table 5 presents the findings in response to interview question 5, showing graduate responses regarding why they chose to attend Pepperdine University.

Table 5

Reasons Why Graduates Attended Pepperdine University

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|---|----------|
| Duration/pace of the program | 11 |
| Quality of the curriculum | 10 |
| Reputation of Pepperdine and or the ELA program | 9 |
| Referral by friend or colleague | 7 |
| Convenient scheduling | 6 |
| Convenient location | 5 |
| Quality of the professors | 4 |
| Cohort model | 3 |
| Returning alumni | 2 |
| Small group/personalized instruction | 2 |
| Other | 2 |
| Practical application | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one reason for choosing to attend Pepperdine University and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The greatest concentration of responses regarding reasons 2003-2006 ELA graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University were related to the duration and or pace of the ELA program (i.e. completing the program in 11 months), with 11 (17.74%) responses, the quality of the ELA curriculum, with 10 (16.12%) responses, and Pepperdine University and or the ELA program's reputation, with nine (14.51%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the convenient scheduling of the program (i.e., fitting the program around work schedules and being convenient if one is raising children), with six (9.67%) responses, and convenient location, with five (8.06%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to returning alumni, with two (3.22%) responses, the ELA program's small group size and or personalized instruction, with two (3.22%) responses, other reasons (i.e. received a flyer in the mail), with two (3.22%) responses, and practical application, with one (1.61%) response. Table J in Appendix J shows the findings in response to interview question 5, presenting

graduate responses by program location and year of graduation regarding why they chose to attend Pepperdine University.

At the Irvine program location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding why 2003-2006 ELA graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University related to the duration and or pace of the ELA program, with seven (28%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the quality of the curriculum, with four (16%) responses, and the reputation of Pepperdine University, with four (16%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the quality of the professors, with one (4%) response, and other (flyer in the mail), with one (4%) response.

At the WLA program location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding why 2003-2006 ELA graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University related to the quality of the curriculum, with six (16.21%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related the convenience of the ELA program location, with two (5.40%) responses, respondents were returning alumni, with two (5.40%) responses, and small group/personalized instruction, with two (5.40%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to other (respondent said Pepperdine University was the only university, out of many, who returned the respondent's call), with one (2.70%) response, and practical application to real life situations, with one (2.70%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates regarding why 2003-2006 ELA graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University related to the reputation of Pepperdine University, with two (16.66%) responses, and the cohort model, with two (16.66%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the duration and or pace of the ELA program, with one (8.33%) response, the quality of the

curriculum, with one (8.33%) response, referral by a friend or colleague, with one (8.33%) response, convenient scheduling, with one (8.33%) response, convenient location, with one (8.33%) response, quality of the professors, with one (8.33%) response, small group/personalized instruction, with one (8.33%) response, and practical application, with one (8.33%) response.

Among 2004 graduates, there was only one response, which was related to the duration and or pace of the ELA program.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates regarding why 2003-2006 ELA graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University related to the quality of the curriculum, with seven (20%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the convenient location of the ELA program, with three (8.57%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the quality of the professors, with one (2.85%) response, the cohort model, with one (2.85%) response, returning alumni, with one (2.85%) response, and small group/personalized instruction, with one (2.85%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates regarding why 2003-2006 ELA graduates chose to attend Pepperdine University related to the duration and or pace of the program, with four (28.57%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the quality of the curriculum, with two (14.28%) responses, referral by a friend or colleague, with two (14.28%) responses, and the quality of the professors, with two (14.28%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the reputation of Pepperdine University, with one (7.14%) response, convenient

scheduling, with one (7.14%) response, convenient location, with one (7.14%) response, and returning alumni, with one (7.14%) response.

The second part of interview question 5 asked: Why did you enroll in the ELA program? Table 6 presents findings in response to interview question 6, noting graduate responses regarding why they chose to enroll in the ELA program at Pepperdine University.

Table 6

Reasons Graduates Enrolled in the ELA Program

| | <i>Responses</i> | <i>n</i> |
|--|------------------|----------|
| Receive degree and or credential | | 16 |
| Career advancement/mobility | | 14 |
| Referral by friend or colleague | | 5 |
| Program structure/curriculum | | 5 |
| Duration/pace of program | | 4 |
| Learning experience (i.e. quality, personalized) | | 3 |
| Reputation of Pepperdine | | 2 |
| Returning alumni | | 2 |
| Convenient scheduling | | 2 |
| Greater influence on teachers and student learning | | 2 |
| Small class size | | 1 |
| Cohort model | | 1 |
| Convenient location | | 1 |
| Increase professional skills | | 1 |
| Salary increase | | 1 |
| Diverse student participant backgrounds | | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one reason for choosing to enroll in the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The greatest concentration of responses regarding why ELA graduates chose to enroll in the ELA program related to receiving their Master of Science in Administration and or receiving their Administrative Services Credential, with a total of 16 (26.22%) responses, and career advancement/mobility, with a total of 14 (22.95%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to program structure/curriculum, with five (8.19%) responses, duration/pace of program, with four (6.55%) responses, and learning

experience, with three (4.91%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to small class size, with one (1.63%) response, cohort model, with one (1.63%) response, convenient location, with one (1.63%) response, increased professional skills, with one (1.63%) response, salary increase, with one (1.63%) response, and diverse student participant backgrounds, with one (1.63%) response. Table K1 in Appendix K presents findings in response to interview question 5 describing why respondents chose to enroll in the Pepperdine University ELA program by program location and year of graduation.

At the Irvine program location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding why graduates chose to enroll in the ELA program related to receiving their degree and or credential, with 11 (45.83%) responses. Mid-range responses related to career advancement/mobility, with a total of five (20.83%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to learning experience, with one (4.16%) response, convenient scheduling, with one (4.16%) response, greater influence on teachers and students, with one (4.16%) response, and convenient location, with one (4.16%) response.

At the WLA program location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding why graduates chose to enroll in the ELA program related to career advancement/mobility, with nine (24.3%) responses. Mid-range responses related to receiving their degree and or credential, with a total of five (13.5%) responses, and referral by a friend or colleague, with five (13.5%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to convenient scheduling, with one (2.7%) response, greater influence on teachers and students, with one (2.7%) response, small class size, with one (2.7%) response, cohort model, with one (2.7%) response, increased professional skills,

with one (2.7%) response, increased salary, with one (2.7%) response, and diverse student participant backgrounds, with one (2.7%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates related to receiving their degree and or credential, with three (30%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to program structure/curriculum, with two (20%) responses and duration/pace of program, with two (20%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to career advancement/mobility, with one (10%) response, greater influence on teachers and students, with one (10%) response, and convenient location, with one (10%) response.

Overall among 2004 graduates, there was one response. This response related to career advancement/mobility.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates related to career advancement/mobility, with nine (27%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to referral by friend or colleague, with four (12%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the reputation of Pepperdine, with one (3%) response, convenient scheduling, with one (3%) response, greater influence on teachers and students, with one (3%) response, increased professional skills, with one (3%) response, increased salary, with one (3%) response, and diverse student participant backgrounds, with one (3%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates related to receiving their degree and or credential, with five (45.45%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to career advancement and mobility, with three (27.27%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to referral by a

friend or colleague, with one (9.09%) response, program structure/curriculum, with one (9.09%) response, and greater influence on teachers and student learning, with one (9.09%) response.

Interview question 6 findings. Interview question 6 asked: In what ways, if any, was your professional career advanced as a result of completing the ELA program?

Table 7 presents findings in response to interview question 6, illustrating graduate responses regarding the ways their professional career was advanced as a result of completing the ELA program.

Table 7

Graduate Career Advancement

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|---|----------|
| Advanced to administrative/new leadership position | 14 |
| Increased leadership knowledge, skills (communication, relationship building), and experience | 11 |
| Appreciated program curriculum | 10 |
| External recognition | 6 |
| Served in greater capacity | 6 |
| Resulted in personal transformation | 4 |
| Uncertain if program advanced career | 4 |
| Developed network and enhanced professional relationships | 3 |
| Provided broader perspective of leadership role and practice | 3 |
| Increased salary | 3 |
| Enhanced personal confidence | 2 |
| Enhanced confidence in professional skills | 2 |
| Provided foundation for doctoral program | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one way in which their careers were advanced as a result of completing the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' professional careers have been advanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to advanced to administrative/new leadership positions, with a total of fourteen (20.28%) responses. Mid-range responses related to having received external recognition, with a total of six (8.69%) responses, and serving in a greater capacity, with

a total of six (8.69%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to providing a foundation for a doctoral program, with a total of one (1.44%) response.

Table L1 in Appendix L presents findings in response to interview question 6, illustrating graduate responses regarding the ways in which their professional careers were advanced as a result of completing the ELA program.

At the Irvine campus location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' professional careers have been advanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to advancing to a new administrative/new leadership position, with seven (26.92%) responses. Mid-range responses related to increased leadership knowledge, skills, and experience, with a total of three (11.53%) responses, appreciation of the program curriculum, with three (11.53%) responses, and serving in a greater capacity, with three (11.53%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to providing a broader perspective of leadership roles and practices, with one (3.84%) response, enhanced confidence in professional skills, with one (3.84%) response, and providing a foundation for a doctoral program, with one (3.84%) response.

At the WLA campus location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates professional careers have been advanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to increased leadership knowledge, skills, and experiences, with eight (19.51%) responses. Mid-range responses related to a personal transformation, with a total of four (9.75%). The smallest concentration of responses related to increased salary, with one (2.43%) response, and enhanced confidence in professional skills, with one (2.43%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates related to advancement to an administrative/new leadership position, with three (27.27%) responses, and appreciation of the program curriculum, with three (27.27%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to increased leadership knowledge, skills, and experience, with two (18.18%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to personal transformation, with one (9.09%) response, developing network and enhancing professional relationships, with one (9.09%) response, and providing the foundation for a doctoral program, with one (9.09%) response.

Among 2004 graduates, one (50%) response related to increased leadership knowledge, skills, and experience. The other (50%) response related to enhanced confidence in professional skills.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates related to the advancement to administrative/new leadership positions, with seven (15.90%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to served in a greater capacity, with four (9.09%) responses, and uncertain if program advanced their career, with four (9.09%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the development of a network and enhancement of professional relationships, with one (2.27%) response, enhancement of personal confidence, with one (2.27%) response, and enhancement of confidence professional skills, with one (2.27%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates related to the advancement to an administrative/new leadership position, with four (36.36%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related increased leadership knowledge, skills, and experience, with two (18.18%) responses. The smallest concentration of

responses related to appreciation of the program curriculum, with one (9.09%) response, external recognition, with one (9.09%) response, serving in a greater capacity, with one (9.09%) response, the development of a network and enhanced professional relationships, with one (9.09%) response, and enhanced personal confidence, with one (9.09%) response.

Interview question 7 findings. Interview question 7 asked: In what ways, if any, was your professional career enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program?

Table 8 presents findings in response to interview question 7, illustrating ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' professional careers have been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program.

Table 8

Graduate Career Enhancement

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|--|----------|
| Greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration | 19 |
| Enhanced confidence in professional skills | 17 |
| Career progression | 6 |
| Developed or enhanced professional relationships | 5 |
| Enhanced personal confidence | 4 |
| External recognition (peers, employer) | 3 |
| Served in greater capacity | 1 |
| Uncertain if any enhancement occurred | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one way their professional career was enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' professional careers have been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with a total of 19 (33.92%) responses. Mid-range responses related to career progression, with a total of six (10.71%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to having served in a greater capacity, with a total of one (1.78%)

response, and uncertainty if enhancement occurred, with one (1.78%) response. Table M1 in Appendix M presents the findings in response to interview question 7, noting graduate responses regarding the ways in which their professional careers were enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program.

At the Irvine campus location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' professional careers have been advanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to enhanced confidence in professional skills, with nine (34.61%) responses. Mid-range responses related to career progression, with a total of three (11.53%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to external recognition, with one (3.84%) response, and serving in a greater capacity, with one (3.84%) response.

At the WLA campus location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' careers have been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to having a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with 11 (35.48%) responses. Mid-range responses related to career progression, with a total of three (9.67%) responses, and the development or enhancement of professional relationships, with three (9.67%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to enhanced personal confidence, with two (6.45%) responses, external recognition, with two (6.45%) responses, and uncertainty if any enhancement occurred, with two (6.45%) responses.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates related to enhanced confidence in professional skills, with four (44.44%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role

of educational administration, with three (33.33%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to career progression, with one (11.11%) response, and external recognition, with one (11.11%) response.

Among 2004 graduates, there was one (100%) response. This response related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with 12 (36.36%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to career progression, with four (12.12%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to uncertainty of any enhancement occurred, with one (11.11%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates related to enhanced confidence in professional skills, with four (26.66%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the development or enhancement of professional relationships, with two (13.33%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to career progression, with one (6.66%) response, uncertainty if any enhancement occurred, with one (6.66%) response, and serving in a greater capacity, with one (6.66%) response.

Interview question 8 findings. Interview question 8 asked: In what ways, if any, did completion of the ELA program enhance your own personal growth? Table 9 presents findings in response to interview question 8, reflecting ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' personal growth was enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program.

Table 9

Enhancement of Personal Growth as a Result of Completing the ELA Program

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|--|----------|
| Developed or enhanced professional skills/confidence | 15 |
| Developed or enhanced professional growth/goals | 15 |
| Greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration | 8 |
| Appreciated program curriculum | 8 |
| Developed or enhanced professional relationships | 6 |
| Developed or enhanced personal relationships | 6 |
| Felt sense of accomplishment | 5 |
| Developed or enhanced personal growth/confidence | 4 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one way in which their personal growth has been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' personal growth has been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to the development or enhancement of professional skills/confidence, with 15 (22.38%) responses, and the development or enhancement of professional growth/goals, with 15 (22.38%) responses. Mid-range responses related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with a total of eight (11.94%) responses, and appreciation of program curriculum, with eight (11.94%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the development or enhancement of personal growth/confidence, with a total of four (5.97%) responses. Table N1 in Appendix N presents findings in response to interview question 8, reflecting ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' personal growth was enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program by program location and year of graduation.

At the Irvine campus location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' personal growth has been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to the development or enhancement of

professional growth/goals, with 10 (37.03%) responses. Mid-range responses related to the development or enhancement of professional growth/goals, with a total of six (22.22%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to appreciation for the program curriculum, with one (3.70%) response, and the development or enhancement of personal relationships, with one (3.70%) response.

At the WLA campus location, the greatest concentration of responses regarding ways in which 2003-2006 ELA graduates' careers have been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program related to the development or enhancement of professional skills/confidence, with nine (22.5%) responses. Mid-range responses related to the development or enhancement of personal relationships, with total of four (10%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to feeling a sense of accomplishment, with two (5%) responses, and the development or enhancement of personal growth/confidence, with two (5%) responses.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates related to the development or enhancement of professional skills/confidence, with four (33.33%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the development or enhancement of professional growth and goals, with two (16.66%) responses, appreciation for program curriculum, with two (16.66%) responses, and the development or enhancement of professional relationships, with two (16.66%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with one (8.33%) response, and the development or enhancement of personal relationships, with one (8.33%) response.

Among 2004 graduates, one (50%) response related to the development or enhancement of professional skills/confidence, and the other (50%) response related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates related to the development or enhancement of professional growth/goals, with eight (21.62%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to appreciation for program curriculum, with four (10.81%) responses and the development or enhancement of personal relationships, with four (10.81%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the development or enhancement of professional relationships, with three (8.10%) responses, the feeling of a sense of accomplishment, with three (8.10%) responses, and the development or enhancement of personal growth/confidence, with three (8.10%) responses.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates related to the development or enhancement of professional growth/goals, with five (31.25%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to the development or enhancement of professional skills/confidence, with three (18.75%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to a greater understanding for the role of educational administration, with one (6.25%) response, development or enhancement of professional relationships, with one (6.25%) response, development or enhancement of personal relationships, with one (6.25%) response, and development or enhancement of personal growth/confidence, with one (6.25%) response.

Research Question 2 Findings

Research question 2 asked: What suggestions, if any, do ELA program graduates from 2003-2006 have about improving the program overall and more specifically, with regards to (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth? Graduate responses to qualitative interview questions 9-10 were used to answer research question 2.

Interview question 9 findings. Interview question 9 included two parts and asked: Based upon your goals for participating in the ELA program, your program experience, and your post-program experience related to your career advancement, career enhancement, and personal development: (a) What would you describe to be the overall strengths of the program? (b) What ideas might you offer for improving the ELA program? Table 10 presents findings in response to interview question 9, noting 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses describing the overall strength of the ELA program.

Table 10

Overall Strengths of the ELA Program

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|---|----------|
| Appreciation for program curriculum (i.e. comprehensive, real life application, practicality) | 18 |
| Appreciation for professors (i.e. caring, personable, knowledgeable) | 11 |
| Appreciation of cohort model | 7 |
| Personal transformation (i.e. discovery of self, personal growth) | 7 |
| Greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration | 5 |
| Enduring relationships with professors | 4 |
| Enduring relationships with cohort members | 3 |
| Small class size | 2 |
| Diversity of cohort members | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one strength of the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The greatest concentration of 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses regarding overall strengths of the ELA program related to appreciation for the program curriculum,

with a total of 18 (31.03%) responses. Mid-range responses related to appreciation for the cohort model, with a total of seven (12.06%) responses, and personal transformation, with seven (12.06%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the diversity of cohort members, with a total of one (1.72%) response. Table O1 in Appendix O presents findings in response to interview question 8, showing graduate responses regarding the overall strengths of the ELA program by program location and year of graduation.

At the Irvine program location, the greatest concentration of 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses regarding overall strengths of the ELA program related to appreciation for the program curriculum, with a total of eight (36.36%) responses. Mid-range responses related to appreciation for the cohort model, with a total of two (9.09%) responses, personal transformation, with a total of two (9.09%) responses, a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with a total of two (9.09%), and enduring relationships with cohort members, with two (9.09) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the small class size, with a total of one (4.54%) response.

At the WLA program location, the greatest concentration of 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses regarding overall strengths of the ELA program related to appreciation for the program curriculum, with 10 (27.77%) responses. Mid-range responses related to appreciation for the cohort model, with five (13.88%) responses and personal transformation, with total of five (13.88%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to small class size, with one (2.77%) response, and diversity of cohort members, with one (2.77%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates related to the appreciation for program curriculum, with four (30.76%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to appreciation for professors, with two (15.38%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with one (7.69%) response, enduring relationships with professors, with one (7.69%) response, enduring relationships with wit cohort members, with one (7.69%) response, and small class size, with one (7.69%) response.

Overall among 2004 graduates, the greatest concentration of responses related to enduring relationships with professors, with two (50%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to the appreciation for program curriculum, with one (25%) response, and appreciation for professors, with one (25%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates related to appreciation for the program curriculum, with nine (31.03%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to a greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration, with four (13.79%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to appreciation for the cohort model, with one (3.44%) response, enduring relationships with professors, with one (3.44%) response, enduring relationships cohort members, with one (3.44%) response, and diversity of cohort members, with one (3.44%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates related to appreciation for the program curriculum, with 10 (27.77%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to appreciation of the cohort model, with five

(13.88%) responses, and personal transformation, with five (13.88%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to small class size, with one (2.77%) response, and diversity of cohort members, with one (2.77%) response.

Interview question 9B asked: What ideas might you offer for improving the ELA program? Table 11 presents findings in response to interview question 9, illustrating 2003-2006 ELA graduate ideas for improving the ELA program .

Table 11

Ideas for Improving the ELA Program

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|--|----------|
| No improvement needed | 7 |
| Focus on daily logistics of educational administration (i.e., discipline, finance, ed codes) | 7 |
| Assist with career/job placement | 3 |
| Provide networking opportunities | 3 |
| Improve enrollment screening | 2 |
| Focus on a variety of school models (i.e. charter schools, high/low performing schools) | 2 |
| Improve professor/peer relations | 2 |
| Improve quality of professors | 2 |
| Improve coursework | 2 |
| Improve student preparation of final project/presentation | 2 |
| Provide fieldwork at a different school | 1 |
| Provide opportunities to shadow administrators | 1 |
| Provide interview process preparation | 1 |
| ELA should be a program continuum from a Pepperdine Bachelor's degree program | 1 |
| Follow-up on Alumni career status and future goals | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one idea for improving the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

The following responses generated the greatest concentration of ideas for improving the ELA program: no improvement needed, with seven (18.91%) responses, and to focus on daily logistics of educational administration, with seven (18.91%) responses. Mid-range responses related to assisting with career/job placement, with three (8.10%) responses, and providing networking opportunities, with three (8.10%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to providing fieldwork at a

different school site, with one (2.70%) response, providing opportunities to shadow administrators, with one (2.70%) response, providing interview process preparation, with one (2.70%) response, having the ELA program be a continuum from a Pepperdine University bachelor's degree program, with one (2.70%) response, and following up on Alumni career status and future goals, with one (2.70%) response. Table P1 in Appendix P presents findings in response to interview question 8, noting 2003-2006 ELA graduate responses regarding ways to improve the ELA program by program location and year of graduation .

At the Irvine program location, the greatest concentration of responses of ideas for improving the ELA program related to focusing on daily logistics of educational administration, with five (41.66%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to no improvement needed, with four (33.33%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to assisting with career/job placement, with one (8.33%) response, providing networking opportunities, with one (8.33%) response, and improving professor/peer relations, with one (8.33%) response.

At the WLA program location, the greatest concentration of responses of ideas for improving the ELA program related to no improvement needed, with three (12%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to focusing on daily logistics of educational administration, with two (8%) responses, assisting with career/job placement, with two (8%) responses, providing networking opportunities, with two (8%) responses, improving the screening of who gets enrolled in the program, with two (8%) responses, focusing on a variety of school models, with two (8%) responses, improving the quality of professors, with two (8%) responses, improving coursework, with two (8%) responses,

and improving student preparation of final project/presentation, with two (8%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to improving professor/peer relations, with one (4%) response, providing fieldwork at a different school site, with one (4%) response, providing opportunities to shadow administrators, with one (4%) response, providing interview process preparation, with one (4%) response, having the ELA program be a continuum from a Pepperdine University bachelor's degree program, with one (4%) response, and following up on Alumni career status and future goals, with one (4%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates related to no improvement needed, with two (33.33%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to focusing on the daily basic logistics of educational administration, with one (16.66%) response, providing networking opportunities, with one (16.66%) response, improving enrollment screening, with one (16.66%) response, and improving professor/peer relations, with one (16.66%) response.

Among 2004 graduates, one (50%) response related to focusing on a variety of school models such as Charter schools and high and low performing schools. The other (50%) response related to improving the ELA coursework.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates related to no improvement needed, with four (21.05%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to assisting with career/job placement, with two (10.52%) responses, and improving student preparation of final project/presentation, with two (10.52%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to improving enrollment screening, with one (5.26%) response, improving the quality of professors, with one

(5.26%) response, and providing fieldwork at a different school site, with one (5.26%) response, providing opportunities to shadow administrators, with one (5.26%) response, providing interview process preparation, with one (5.26%) response, ELA as a program continuum from a Pepperdine University bachelor's program, with one (5.26%) response, and following up on Alumni career status and future goals, with one (5.26%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates related to focusing on the daily basic logistics of educational administration, with three (37.50%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to providing networking opportunities, with two (25%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to no improvement needed, with one (12.5%) response, focusing on a variety of school models, with one (12.5%) response, and improving the quality of professors, with one (12.5%) response.

Interview question 10 findings. Interview question 10 asked: Is there anything else you would like to add or elaborate on? Table 12 reflects findings in response to interview question 10, presenting responses of 2003-2006 ELA graduate additions to or elaborations on their telephone interview responses.

The greatest concentration of responses for additional comments or elaboration on telephone interview responses was nothing to add/elaborate on, with 10 (19.60%) responses. Mid-range responses related to appreciation for Pepperdine University, with six (11.76%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to improving Alumni career/job advancement and placement, with one (1.96%) response, the development of enduring relationships with cohort members, with one (1.96%) response, improvement of enrollment screening, with one (1.96%) response, providing internship

opportunities, with one (1.96%) response, interest in enrolling in a doctoral program, with one (1.96%) response, following up on Alumni career status and future goals, with one (1.96%) response, improvement of and or adding to the coursework, with one (1.96%) response, the feeling of a sense of achievement upon completion of the program, with one (1.96%) response, and the need for a doctoral program to be the continuum of the ELA program, with one (1.96%) response. Table Q1 in Appendix Q reflects findings in response to interview question 10, presenting additional comments and elaborations from 2003-2006 ELA graduates on their telephone interview responses.

Table 12

Telephone Interview Elaborations

| Responses | <i>n</i> |
|--|----------|
| Nothing to add/elaborate on | 10 |
| Had a positive experience | 9 |
| Appreciated program curriculum | 8 |
| Appreciated Pepperdine University | 6 |
| Add more experienced professors | 3 |
| Tuition was high | 2 |
| Recommended/encouraged others to enroll in ELA program | 2 |
| Appreciated professors | 2 |
| Improve Alumni career/job advancement and placement | 1 |
| Developed enduring relationships with cohort members | 1 |
| Improve enrollment screening | 1 |
| Provide internship opportunities | 1 |
| Interested in enrolling in doctoral program | 1 |
| Follow-up on Alumni career status and future goals | 1 |
| Improve/add to coursework | 1 |
| Felt sense of achievement | 1 |
| Need for ELA and doctoral program continuum | 1 |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one comment therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30. The findings at the same rate of frequency appear in no particular order.

At the Irvine program location, the greatest concentration of responses for additional comments or elaboration on telephone interview responses was nothing to add/elaborate on, with six (31.57%) responses. Mid-range responses related to having a

positive experience, with three (15.78%) responses and appreciation for Pepperdine University, with three (15.78%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to adding more experienced professors, with one (5.26%) response, their recommending and encouraging others to enroll in the ELA program, with one (5.26%) response, appreciation for the professors, with one (5.26%) response, the need for internship opportunities, with one (5.26%) response, and interest in enrolling in a doctoral program, with one (5.26%) response.

At the WLA program location, the greatest concentration of responses for additional comments or elaboration on telephone interview responses was having a positive experience, with six (18.75%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to nothing to add or elaborate on, with four (12.5%) responses, and appreciation for Pepperdine University, with four (12.5%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to their recommending and encouraging other to enroll in the ELA program, with one (3.12%) response, appreciation for the professors, with one (3.12%) response, improving alumni career/job advancement and placement, with one (3.12%) response, the development of enduring relationships, with cohort members with one (3.12%) response, the need for improvement in enrollment screening, with one (3.12%) response, following up on Alumni career status and future goals, with one (3.12%) response, improving and or adding to the coursework, with one (3.12%) response, the feeling of a sense of achievement upon completion of the ELA program, with one (3.12%) response, and the need for an ELA and doctoral program continuum, with one (3.12%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2003 graduates for additional comments or elaboration on telephone interview responses related to appreciation of the program curriculum, with three (33.33%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to having a positive experience, with two (22.22%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to nothing to add or elaborate on, with one (11.11%) response, appreciation of Pepperdine University, with one (11.11%) response, adding more experienced professors, with one (11.11%) response, and improvement of enrollment screening, with one (11.11%) response.

There were three responses among 2004 graduates. One response (33.33%) related to having a positive experience. Another response (33.33%) related to the appreciation of Pepperdine University. The last response (33.33%) related to recommending/encouraging others to enroll in the ELA program.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2005 graduates for additional comments or elaboration on telephone interview responses related to nothing to add/elaborate on, with five (17.85%) responses, and appreciation of the program curriculum, with five (17.85%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to appreciation of Pepperdine University, with three (10.71%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to adding more experienced professors, with one (3.57%) response, tuition was high, with one (3.57%) response, improving Alumni career/job advancement and placement, with one (3.57%) response, providing internship opportunities, with one (3.57%) response, interest in enrolling in a doctoral program, with one (3.57%) response, following up on Alumni career status and future goals, with one (3.57%) response, improvement or addition to coursework, with one (3.57%) response,

the feeling of a sense of achievement, with one (3.57%) response, and the need for an ELA and doctoral program continuum, with one (3.57%) response.

Overall, the greatest concentration of responses among 2006 graduates for additional comments or elaboration on telephone interview responses related to nothing to add or elaborate on, with four (36.36%) responses. Mid-range concentration of responses related to having a positive experience, with two (18.18%) responses. The smallest concentration of responses related to appreciation of Pepperdine University, with one (9.09%) response, adding more experienced professors, with one (9.09%) response, tuition being high, with one (9.09%) response, recommending and or encouraging others to enroll in the ELA program, with one (9.09%) response, and the development of enduring relationships with cohort members, with one (9.09%) response.

Summary

Eight key findings resulted from an analysis of the study data. First, ELA graduates shared that they enrolled in the ELA for its structure and curriculum, based on a referral from friends and colleagues, and because of its duration and pace, but mainly to earn their degree and credential, advance their careers, and increase their career mobility. Second, 20 (66.66%) ELA graduates advanced to new leadership and or new administrative positions that included additional leadership responsibilities including coordinators, facilitators, TOSA, principals, vice principals, and specialists, most of which were school site oriented. Third, 14 (70%) of the 20 ELA study graduates who advanced to new leadership and or administrative positions advanced to positions that required a California Professional Administrative Services Credential, stating that ELA opened doors to positions that were unattainable without it. Fourth, the greatest perceived

impact of the ELA program on study graduates' career advancement was the actual advancement of graduates to new leadership and new administrative positions and their increased knowledge, skills, and experience, from taking on adjunct duties to securing administrative and leadership positions. Fifth, the greatest perceived impacts of the ELA program on study graduates' career enhancement was a greater understanding of and appreciation for the role of educational administration and enhanced confidence in professional skills, such as providing a foundation of understanding for educational administrative roles to being more assertive about who they are as leaders. Sixth, the greatest perceived impacts of the ELA program on study graduates' personal growth were the development and or enhancement of professional skills and confidence, the development and or enhancement of professional growth and goals, and a greater understanding of and appreciation for the role of educational administration. Graduate personal growth ranged from enhanced and developed presentation, organizational, and interpersonal relationship skills to developing professional goals to further their education. Seventh, ELA study graduates perceive the ELA program curriculum and professors to be the greatest strengths of the ELA program, stating that the curriculum was comprehensive, practical, and had real life application and that the professors were caring, knowledgeable, and responsive. Lastly, ELA study graduates suggested focusing on daily logistics of educational administration and providing further career support as two areas for ELA program improvement. Daily logistics included discipline scenarios, budgets, and finances, while career support involved job placement, networking, and internships.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The primary purpose of this phenomenological research was to describe Pepperdine ELA 2003-2006 graduates' perceptions about the impact of the ELA program on their subsequent career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. The secondary purpose was to obtain these graduates' suggestions for improving the ELA program to better prepare future graduates for career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. The following two research questions guided this study:

1. What perceived impact, if any, has the ELA program had on (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth of students who graduated from ELA from 2003-2006?
2. What suggestions, if any, do ELA program graduates from 2003-2006 have about improving the program overall and more specifically, with regards to (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, and (c) personal growth?

This study used a qualitative phenomenological methodology to explore and describe the perceived impact of Pepperdine University's ELA program on ELA graduates' career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth, as well as to obtain suggestions for improving the ELA program. The researcher collected interview data from 30 students selected from an eligible pool of 236 students who: graduated from Pepperdine University's ELA program from July 2003 through July 2006, received their Master's degree in Administration, and who became eligible for a California Administrative Services Credential as a result of their completion of the ELA program.

Twelve of the ELA graduates in this study were Irvine Graduate Campus program participants and 18 were WLA ELA program participants. Six of the 30 study

participants graduated in 2003, 1 participant graduated in 2004, 17 participants graduated in 2005, and 6 participants graduated in 2006. Thirteen study participants currently hold school site administrative positions, 11 participants hold School Site Non-Administrative positions, 2 participants hold District Administrative positions, 2 hold Non-Education Administrative positions, and 2 participants are currently unemployed. They identified the ELA curriculum and professors as program strengths. Recommendations for ELA program improvement referred to additional career support and greater focus on the daily logistics of educational administration.

Discussion of Findings

Finding 1. ELA study graduates enrolled in the ELA for its structure and curriculum, based on a referral from friends and colleagues, and for its duration and pace, but mainly to earn their degree and credential, advance their careers, and increase their career mobility. Participant responses regarding why they enrolled in the ELA program ranged from “the program offered both masters and administrative credential simultaneously” to “I have future goals to be an administrator.” A substantial percentage – 64.28% – of ELA study graduates advanced in their post-ELA careers, while 70.58% of WLA graduates advanced in their post-ELA careers. One ELA respondent indicated, “it allowed me to contribute as a quasi part of the administrative team and advance to associate principal.” Another ELA respondent reported,

I feel like I have broken into two school districts, who most people kind of look at me and say who do you know and because I am not from California, I knew no one. And I think it’s all due to the preparation of the ELA program.

Finding 2. Twenty (66.66%) ELA study graduates advanced to new leadership and or new administrative positions that included additional leadership responsibilities. These positions ranged from coordinators, facilitators, TOSA, principals, vice principals, and specialists, most of which were school site related. A small but substantial percentage – 15.94% – of study graduates reported an increase in their leadership knowledge, skills, and experiences, all of which were perceived to be key contributing factors leading to graduates’ career advancement. One of the results of Orr and Orphanos’ (2011) study implies that “quality preparation matters and contributes significantly to what graduates learn, and ultimately how they practice leadership and work to improve their schools” (p. 50). “I got to influence more of the school and where the school was going,” explained one ELA study graduate. During the telephone interviews, another ELA study graduate revealed,

The program doesn’t make you just study education, just study leadership, just study administration, it’s learning who you are as an instructional leader, as a manager of an organization, as an administrator. So, when I sit down at an interview and questions are coming at you, you are able to give more honest answers from who you are as a person, and I think that shows through.

Finding 3. Fourteen (70%) of the 20 ELA study graduates who advanced to new leadership and or new administrative positions advanced to positions that required a California Professional Administrative Services Credential. A large percentage – 64.28% – of Irvine program location graduates advanced in their post-ELA careers, while 70.58% of WLA graduates advanced in their post-ELA careers. During the telephone interview, one ELA study graduate revealed that completing the ELA program allowed her to “open

doors” and without completion of the ELA program, she “would not have gotten her last three jobs.”

One ELA study graduate reported that she “went from a TOSA to an administrator in the district” while another stated she secured an administrative position in a school district. Orr and Orphanos (2011) explain how “leadership candidates who complete an exemplary leadership preparation program increase the likelihood that they will have superior preparation, thereby increasing the scope and quality of what they learned about leadership” (p. 48).

Finding 4. The greatest perceived impact of the ELA program on study graduates’ career advancement was the actual advancement of graduates to new leadership and administrative positions and their increased knowledge, skills, and experience. One participant stated:

I feel like I have broken into two school districts who most people kind of look at me and say, who do you know, because I am not from California, I knew no one.

And I think it’s all due to the preparation of the ELA program.

One ELA study graduate explained that she was:

able to take on adjunct duties, sit in on IEP meetings and other district committees because I had the administrative credential so I was able to serve in a greater capacity than I would’ve if I hadn’t had that credential.

In Leithwood, Anderson, and Wahlstrom’s research (as cited in Orr & Orphanos, 2011)

leadership practices that most strongly influence teachers and organizational conditions are those related to:

- Setting direction (through vision, goals, and expectations).
- Helping individual teachers (through support and modeling).
- Redesigning the organization (to foster collaboration and engage families and community).
- Managing the organization (providing organizational resources and support). (p. 26)

Finding 5. The greatest perceived impact of the ELA program on study graduates' career enhancement was a greater understanding of and appreciation for the role of educational administration and enhanced confidence in professional skills. One participant stated, "It gave me the foundation to understand the overall spectrum of what goes on at schools and districts." Another participant expressed greater self-assurance that he would be making sound decisions when it came down to leadership and actually implementing programs and working with staff. He was more assertive of who he was as a leader. Enhanced confidence in public speaking, enhanced assertiveness as a leader, the ability to see the administrative world in a global sense, ways to approach a wide variety of coworkers, and the ability to take an introspective look at ones own personal philosophy and applying this skill to an administrative role to help whole school organizational change were among the professional skills enhanced through completion of the ELA program. Browne-Ferrigno (2003) explains how "changing educational careers requires an individual to relinquish the comfort and confidence of a known role – such as being a teacher – and experience the discomfort and uncertainty of a new, unknown role – being a principal" (p. 470). One respondent stated, "the confidence piece

was my greatest take away from the program,” while another stated, “I felt more empowered.”

Finding 6. The greatest perceived impact of the ELA program on study graduates’ personal growth was the development and or enhancement of professional skills and confidence, the development and or enhancement of professional growth and goals, and a greater understanding of and appreciation for the role of educational administration. In addition to the development and enhancement of presentation, organizational, and interpersonal relationship skills, one ELA study graduate stated the ELA program prepared her “with the courage to know that I can handle any situation, whether I am a teacher, coordinator, or administrator” while another study graduate asserted it “almost made me fearless.” Many students developed doctoral program goals as they felt the ELA program made them feel that they could further their education. While many study graduates were firm regarding their desires to become an educational administrator, two graduates reported that upon completion of the ELA program, they decided that their career goals had changed and they no longer wanted to be traditional school administrators. One study graduate went from being a teacher to a corporate trainer, while the other went from a district administrative position to a co-founder of a company that consults with and provides services and products to support the implementation of online learning programs at the K-12 level.

Finding 7. ELA study graduates perceived the ELA program curriculum and professors to be the greatest strengths of the ELA program. ELA graduates expressed an appreciation for the comprehensiveness, practicality, and real life application of the curriculum. One ELA respondent stated that the curriculum touched upon almost every

topic she has encountered as an administrator, “gave a solid foundation for going into real life,” and tied into daily work. One ELA study graduate stated that “working on a project that was making your school a better place and the fact that I was able to take on this project from beginning to completion is always great.” ELA respondents stated that “professors were very caring and knowledgeable” and further stated that “the professors truly work with you, one on one, as a person, as opposed to going through a program and sometimes the professors don’t even have conversations with you.” Two ELA respondents appreciated the knowledge and experience the professors offered, stating, “they work in the field we are aspiring to.” Orr and Orphanos (2011) state that one element of an exemplary leadership preparation program is knowledgeable (about their subject matter) faculty. One ELA respondent explained the importance of her relationship with her professors: “It was mostly the professors, their willingness to reach out and help you when you needed it. I kept in touch with a couple of them after the program.” The use of the cohort model, which 12.06% of students felt was a program strength, keeps the teacher-to-student ratio low. ELA respondents stated that the program would not have been “nearly as powerful if it wasn’t an element” and as a result, “relationships have been built that I will have the rest of my life.” Social and professional support, another element associated with exemplary leadership programs, Orr and Orphanos explain, include “organizing students into cohorts that take common courses together in a prescribed sequence” (p. 22).

Finding 8. Participants suggested focusing on daily logistics of educational administration and providing further career support as two areas for ELA program improvement. Seven (23.33%) ELA study graduates stated that the ELA program would

benefit from focusing on the daily logistics of educational administration, as well as from getting a firmer grasp on education law, discipline procedures and scenarios, budgeting and funding, and special education policies. Five (71%) of these seven ELA study graduates attended the Irvine campus location while the other two (29%) participants attended the WLA program location. Four (57.14%) of these study graduates are currently in school site administrative positions, one (14.28%) is a teacher, one (14.28%) is a co-founder of a business, and one (14.28%) is unemployed (resignation from being a teacher). Graduate study graduates reported, “it seems like we really didn’t cover the down to earth basic things [administrators] do everyday.” Barnett (2004) explains how “activities should be designed to increase prospective school leaders’ proficiency in meeting national standards, providing authentic tasks reflecting activities completed by practitioners on a daily basis” (p. 127).

ELA graduates reported that the ELA program would benefit from providing additional career support. One participant reported that they would benefit from job placement, stating, “I don’t think I’ve gotten any help finding a job at all. I don’t think I have gotten help from career services.” Other ELA respondents suggested that having opportunities to shadow administrators would assist with career progression. Many ELA respondents suggested that the ELA program would benefit from offering more networking with individuals “that are in higher levels of position in the educational community” and “networking with administrators with some of the schools and districts that the professors are associated with so that we could sit down and talk to them about the things they are looking for.” These findings are reflective of the 2009 informal focus group meeting held by Dr. Kliewer (L. Purrington, personal communication, September

23, 2009) where new and aspiring school administrators discussed ideas to bolster the new ELA and ELAP programs. Job opportunities and further training/academies were stated as possible university support areas during this meeting (L. Purrington, personal communication, September 23, 2009). Further, new administrators suggested support areas such as building mentor/friend networks, participating in an administrative context as opposed to observing, and ongoing graduate support for an additional 1-3 years (L. Purrington, personal communication, September 23, 2009). One ELA respondent explained that “if the program actually helped to place people, not within actual positions, but for intern positions, so that you have practical experience that you can point to and say yes, I’ve helped in this area.” Orr and Orphanos (2011) express that “candidates must have both high-quality preparation and high-quality internships to experience learning benefits that positively influence their subsequent leadership practices” (p. 48).

Conclusions

Findings from this phenomenological study support the following conclusions.

Conclusion 1. The ELA program had a strong positive impact on the ELA graduates who participated in the study. Overall, the students perceived that the ELA program was successful in advancing and enhancing their careers as well as contributing to their personal growth. Twenty (66.66%) graduates advanced to new leadership and or administrative positions that included additional leadership responsibilities. For the purposes of this study, career advancement reflects the progression of the particular occupation for which one was trained. This includes those individuals whose career advancement was related to position changes requiring a California Professional

Administrative Services Credential as well as those whose career advancement reflected increased responsibility, but for which the Administrative Services Credential was not a requirement.

A large percentage – 91.07% – of graduate responses related to career enhancement reflected aspects of the development or enhancement of their professional development. Confidence in professional skills, serving in a greater capacity, the development and or enhancement of professional relationships, a greater understanding of the role of educational administration, career progression, and external recognition reflect graduate categorical responses to career enhancement. Career enhancement, for the purposes of this study, is the augmentation or improvement of an individual's career knowledge, understanding, ability, skills, and potential.

For the purposes of this study, personal growth is defined as the involvement of being conscious of one's thoughts, feelings, prejudices, and judgments and using this personal knowledge to act with mindfulness and in greater accordance with one's values and potential. Key to personal growth is continual development in the face of new challenges (Levine et al., 2006). With these definitions in mind, it is not difficult to see how graduate responses overlapped career advancement and career enhancement with personal growth. A substantial percentage – 77.61% – of graduate responses to the question of how their personal growth was enhanced as a result of their completion of the ELA program reflected elements of professional development. The development and or enhancement of professional skills, confidence, growth and goals, a greater understanding for the role of educational administration, appreciation for program curriculum, and the development and or enhancement of professional relationships

reflected 62.5% of graduate categorical responses to the enhancement of personal growth. A smaller but substantial percentage – 37.5% – of graduate categorical responses, such as feeling a sense of accomplishment, enhanced personal relationships, and enhanced personal growth and confidence, reflected actual personal growth as stated in the definition of personal growth used in this study.

Conclusion 2. Career advancement was a priority motivator for participants' enrolling in the ELA program. A small but significant percentage – 22.95% – of graduates enrolled in the ELA program to advance their careers and increase career mobility, so it is not surprising that 26.22% of graduates enrolled in the program to receive their degree and or credential in order to increase their chances of advancing in their chosen careers. Graduates stated that they wanted to become administrators and principals. Currently, 17 (57%) graduates are in positions that are administrative in nature, while 13 (43%) are in positions that are non-administrative in nature.

Conclusion 3. ELA graduates in this study perceive career enhancement, career advancement, and personal growth to be nearly synonymous. Throughout this study, ELA graduates' interpretation of personal growth encompassed elements of career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. When graduates were asked how their personal growth was enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program, five (62.5%) out of eight categorical responses reflected elements of professional development (i.e. developed/enhanced professional skills, goals, confidence, relationships, etc.), while three (37.5%) reflected elements of personal development (i.e. sense of accomplishment, developed/enhanced personal growth, goals, relationships). One graduate stated bluntly, "It was professional growth only, it wasn't personal." In

contrast, one graduate said, “I think it was mostly personal,” and continued to state how she developed professionally with knowledge of how the educational system works, issues in education, and having a greater understanding of how things are run and how decisions are made in educational settings. Volkwein (1999) asserts that, “simply put, the institutional goal should be the improvement of student learning and growth” (p. 16). The following graduate response represents the synonymous nature of personal and professional development in his life:

The ELA program gave me the ability to constantly reflect and challenge what you think you know in any sort of way. That’s helped me personally in my life, in my marriage and being a father as much as being an administrator and an instructional leader and a teacher.

Conclusion 4. Overall, ELA graduates in this study were very satisfied with the ELA curriculum. A recommendation offered to improve the curriculum related to increasing opportunities for management/operational learning and experience. A recommendation related to career advancement was to provide students and graduates with additional career support. Eighteen (60%) graduates stated that they appreciated the program curriculum. Seven (19%) graduates recommended that the ELA would benefit from focusing on the daily logistics of educational administration such as discipline scenarios, budgeting, and education codes. Graduates stated they were “lacking detailed knowledge about technical things like discipline procedures, ed codes, and special education policies.” One graduated expressed concern about not knowing the day to day logistics: “I think I was more nervous about discipline, some of the logistical aspects of it, than maybe I was about the big picture about leadership or curriculum and

instruction.” As stated earlier in this study, James Lipham (as cited in Snowden & Gorton, 1998) describes the administrator as one who acts as a stabilizing force, using existing structures or procedures to achieve goals whereas a leader initiates changes in established structures, procedures, or goals. According to Murphy (2001), education leadership is shifting its focus from educational administration as management to educational administration primarily concerned with teaching and learning. Some qualities a school administrator may encompass include: (a) an understanding of caring and humanistic concerns as a key to effective leadership; (b) knowledge of the transformational and change dynamics of the superintendency; (c) an appreciation of the collegial and collaborative foundations of school administration; and (d) an emphasis on the ethical and reflective dimensions of leadership (Murphy, 2001).

Recommendations for Practice

All higher education institutions should incorporate both alumni accomplishments after degree/program completion and general satisfaction with their program experience as alumni follow-up 5 years after program completion. As mentioned in this study, most colleges and universities employ a general “in-house” created exit survey of their graduates to measure program satisfaction. Many universities want to know about graduate satisfaction with the program itself and to what degree the program met their satisfaction. A similar follow-up survey such as the one used in this study could be used by all higher education institutions. The researcher recommends the incorporation of this study’s interview questions into an already existent and currently implemented survey, such as a Noel-Levitz survey.

To assist with recruitment and increased participation, key leaders from each cohort should be contacted to help make connections with fellow cohort members and or classmates. In this study, after telephone interviews were conducted, many of the graduates offered to assist the researcher by contacting their classmates to participate in the study. If key leaders are identified, the researcher believes that this personal contact would increase participation in any further study of the cohorts and of Pepperdine University graduates in other programs as well.

People who are connected with Pepperdine University should be hired to conduct alumni telephone interviews. The researcher discovered that graduates were more willing to participate in the study because the researcher was a fellow alumna. There may have been a perceived connection that contributed to their desire to participate.

Longitudinal studies of cohorts 1 year post-graduation, 3 years post-graduation, and 5 years post-graduation should be conducted. A longitudinal study of the cohorts is a good way of tracking alumni career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth.

Rather than asking for elaborations or additions to the interview at the conclusion of the telephone interview session, the researcher recommends having probing/follow-up questions prepared for each telephone interview question given. Subjects may have brief answers that could use immediate clarification, elaboration, or examples that could further enrich the study.

It is recommended that Pepperdine University use its National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) membership that it currently uses for research updates, employment standards, and career services best practices (Y. Djadali, personal

communication, November 30, 2011) in ways that align with this study. NACE sets the benchmark in the outcome-based approach to alumni surveys and display reports, including recent graduate data such as job earnings and difficulties with job searches. NACE works to assess the impact that college has on respondents regarding whether college education was a worthwhile investment and the extent to which the college-based career service was helpful in their finding a job. Pepperdine University would benefit from NACE services by tracking career advancement of its graduates in the ELA program, as well as all of its other graduate programs.

What can professors do and what can the program curriculum incorporate to meet student needs to be exposed to more managerial/operational components of educational administrators? Professors should continue to assess students and solicit regular feedback about the practical application component of CPSEL 3, promoting the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment (WestEd and the Association of California School Administrators, 2004). Each cohort has a different set of students with individualized needs and interests. Continuing to address those needs and interests on a regular basis is recommended.

Recommendations for Further Study

From the research conducted on this study, recommendations for further research include:

Further research could be done on the order in which interview questions are asked. The researcher recommends changing the order in which subjects are asked about their career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. Subjects could first

be asked about their personal growth without having been asked about advancement or enhancement of their careers. This may change the data. The study showed that the subjects viewed career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth as almost synonymous. If the personal growth question is asked first, subjects' responses may differ. The researcher recommends that the question about career enhancement be asked after the personal growth question, then finally the career advancement question.

Further research could be done investigating the benefits of front-loading the definitions of career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth before asking each of the interview questions. This process may clarify the definition of each category and narrow down subject responses.

Further research could be done to investigate the benefits of following up on this study's graduates 1-2 years after this study was conducted. A follow-up study exploring the responses further should be considered.

Further research could be done investigating the benefits of incorporating the interview questions in this study with the currently used "in-house" surveys used by Pepperdine University. The interview questions could be placed in the survey and the responses would be open-ended.

Final Thoughts

This study found that Pepperdine University's ELA program had a strong positive impact on the ELA graduates who participated in the study, and that, overall, the students perceived it was successful in advancing and enhancing their careers as well as contributing to their personal growth. Participants in this study perceived career

advancement as a priority motivator for enrolling in the ELA program and they perceived career enhancement, career advancement, and personal growth to be nearly synonymous.

The outcomes of this study suggest that it is possible for graduate programs to obtain meaningful data related to career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth from alumni beyond graduation and that such data might provide informative and meaningful feedback for program leaders. Obtaining these data, however, requires more personalized outreach through multiple types of media and from individuals with whom graduates are familiar. The opportunity exists for graduate programs to call on selected graduates to assist with this kind of outreach and also to prepare graduates to expect outreach after graduation and to encourage their response. Seizing this opportunity could yield valuable data that would otherwise be un-tapped, and might also serve to strengthen relations with alumni.

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_09.pdf](http://www.wascenior.org/findit/files/forms/How_to_Become_Accredited__Feb_09.pdf)

APPENDIX A

California Colleges and Universities with Commission-Approved Professional Preparation Programs: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Internship Programs

CSU System

Bakersfield, California State University
Chico, California State University
Dominguez Hills, California State University
East Bay, California State University
Fresno, California State University
Humboldt State University
Pomona, California Polytechnic University
Sacramento, California State University
San Bernardino, California State University
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University
San Jose State University
San Luis Obispo, California Polytechnic State University
Sonoma State University
Stanislaus, California State University

UC System

Berkeley, University of California

Private Institutions

Azusa Pacific University
Brandman University
Fresno Pacific University
Loyola Marymount University
Mills College
National University
Notre Dame de Namur University
Point Loma Nazarene University
Santa Clara University
Simpson University
Touro University
University of La Verne
University of Redlands
University of San Diego
University of the Pacific

Retrieved November 20, 2010 from CTC Website:
http://134.186.81.79/fmi/xsl/CTC_apm/recordlist_SCadmInt.html

APPENDIX B

California Colleges and Universities with Commission-Approved Professional Preparation Programs: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs

CSU System

Bakersfield, California State University
Channel Islands, California State University
Chico, California State University
Dominguez Hills, California State University
East Bay, California State University
Fresno, California State University
Fullerton, California State University
Humboldt State University
Long Beach, California State University
Los Angeles, California State University
Northridge, California State University
Pomona, California Polytechnic University
Sacramento, California State University
San Bernardino, California State University
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University
San Jose State University
San Luis Obispo, California Polytechnic State University
San Marcos, California State University
Sonoma State University
Stanislaus, California State University

UC System

Berkeley, University of California
Irvine, University of California
Los Angeles, University of California

Private Institutions

Alliant International University
Azusa Pacific University
Brandman University
California Baptist University
California Lutheran University
Chapman University
Concordia University
Fielding Graduate University
Fresno Pacific University
Hope International University
La Sierra University

Loyola Marymount University
Mills College
National University
Notre Dame de Namur University
Pepperdine University
Point Loma Nazarene University
Santa Clara University
Simpson University
St. Mary's College
Touro University
University of La Verne
University of Phoenix
University of Redlands
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco
University of the Pacific

Districts, Counties and Other Entities

Fortune School of Education, formerly Project Pipeline
Madera County Superintendent of Schools
Orange County Department of Education
San Joaquin County Office of Education (Project Impact) District Internship
Santa Barbara County Office of Education
Santa Clara County Office of Education

Retrieved November 20, 2010 from CTC Website:
http://134.186.81.79/fmi/xsl/CTC_apm/recordlist_SCadm.html

APPENDIX C

Telephone Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the telephone interview. I will be asking you 10 questions. This telephone interview will be recorded and you will have an opportunity at the end to add/edit any additional comments.

Let's begin.

1. What campus did you graduate from?
2. What year did you graduate?

Question 3 has two parts.

3. What positions have you served in since graduation? Did any of these positions require an Administrative Services Credential? Y/N

Thank you. Question number four also has two parts.

4. What is your current position and or job title? Does this position require an Administrative Services Credential? Y/N

Question five has two parts to it as well.

5. Why did you choose to attend Pepperdine University? Why did you enroll in the ELA program?

Thank you. Question six.

6. In what ways, if any, was your professional career advanced as a result of completing the ELA program?

Now on to question number seven:

7. In what ways, if any, was your professional career enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program?

Thank you, this is question eight:

8. In what ways, if any, did completion of the ELA program enhance your own personal growth?

Question nine has two parts:

9. Based upon your goals for participating in the ELA program, your program experience, and your post-program experience related to your career advancement, career enhancement, and personal development:
 - a) What would you describe to be the overall strengths of the ELA program?

The second part of the question is:

- b) What ideas might you offer for improving the ELA program?

Thank you, and we are now on the last question.

10. Is there anything else you would like to add or elaborate on?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. That concludes our telephone interview. Have a great day/evening!

APPENDIX D

Letter of Permission to Perform Research

Statement of the Researcher

The purpose of this research is to study Pepperdine Education Leadership Academy (ELA) graduates' perceptions about the impact of the ELA program on their subsequent (1) career advancement, (2) career enhancement, and (3) personal growth. The secondary purpose is to obtain their suggestions for improving the ELA program to better prepare graduates for (1) career advancement, (2) career enhancement, and (3) personal growth.

With the assistance of Alumni Services at Pepperdine University, the researcher will contact and invite ELA graduates to participate in the study. Initial contact and invitation to participate in the study will be sent through Alumni Services. This initial contact/invitation will contain a link to an electronic survey that will request their participation in the study, request their informed consent, and request basic contact information so that the researcher can schedule a telephone interview with each ELA graduate participant.

I am seeking permission to conduct this study and to connect with Pepperdine University's Alumni Services and ask for their support in sending the survey to ELA graduates from graduating years 2003-2006. ELA graduates from July 2003 – July 2006 will be surveyed for the first administration of the survey and telephone interview, but connecting with ELA graduates through Alumni Services from 2007 and beyond may also need to occur until the desired number of respondents is reached.

I commit to following all Pepperdine research guidelines and human subjects considerations and will continue to work under the supervision of my chair and dissertation committee members. I am attaching the preliminary chapters for a more detailed introduction to my study proposal along with the survey questionnaire and interview questions.

If you approve of this study, please sign and date in the spaces provided below and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

Printed name of researcher Signature of researcher Date

Statement of the Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology for Pepperdine University

I have had an opportunity to review the survey questionnaire as stated above. I give my permission to the researcher, Ms. Ruth I. Nichols, to connect with Pepperdine University's Alumni Services and ask for their support in sending the survey to ELA graduates from graduating years 2003-2006. I give my permission to the researcher to connect with Pepperdine University's Alumni Services to contact ELA graduates from 2007 and beyond until the desired number of respondents is reached. I also give my permission to said researcher to telephone interview the ELA graduates involved in this study.

Printed name of Dean Weber Signature of Dean Weber Date

APPENDIX E

Introductory Email Invitation Letter

Hello, my name is Ruth Nichols. I am a graduate of the Education Leadership Academy (ELA) at Pepperdine University and I am currently working on my dissertation in the Organizational Leadership doctoral program at Pepperdine University. I am reaching out to ELA alumni from graduating years 2003-2006 to assist me in my study because I am interested in your ELA post-graduation experiences. ***My study will attempt to explore the impact, if any, the program had on advancing your career, enhancing your career, and on your personal growth, as well as to solicit suggestions for improving the program to better prepare graduates for career advancement.*** I am interested in your experiences and suggestions and would value your participation in this study.

Your participation in this study is important because it will help assess the impact the ELA program has had on it's graduates, assist Pepperdine in assessing if the intent of the program is being met, and provide Pepperdine with meaningful data to inform program improvements.

In appreciation for your willingness to participate in this study, you will be given the option to enter your name into a drawing for a \$100 Target e-gift card.

Your participation in this study involves the following:

1. Read and complete the Introduction to Study/Informed Consent. You will be requested to participate in the study, read and understand the informed consent (your participation is voluntary, anonymous, and confidential), you will be given an option to enter a raffle for a \$100 Target e-gift card, and given the option to receive a copy of study findings. Your contact information and telephone interview availability dates and times will also be requested.
2. Telephone interview. You will be asked a total of ten (10) questions that will be scheduled on a day and time that is convenient for you. The telephone interview averages approximately 20 minutes to complete.

If you would like to participate in this study, please click on the link below. This link will direct you to the online Introduction to Study/Informed Consent through Zoomerang.

I would like to thank Pepperdine's Alumni Services for supporting me in my study by allowing me to reach out to you.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this study.

Ruth Nichols

APPENDIX F

Introduction to Study/Informed Consent

Page One

Welcome ELA Graduate!

You have been invited to participate in a study entitled, *Career Advancement, Career Enhancement, and Personal Growth of Pepperdine University's Educational Leadership Academy Graduate Program Alumni*. Thank you in advance for considering taking part in this study by completing this online component and scheduling a telephone interview!

This Introduction to Study/Informed Consent online component will cover the following information:

- Overview of the study and the nature of your voluntary participation and protection as a subject in this study;
- Opportunity to participate in the \$100 Target e-gift card raffle;
- Opportunity to request a copy of study findings; and
- Request for your contact information and your telephone interview availability

Let's Begin!

Page Two

Informed Consent

The following consent form contains legal language that is required by all research granting institutions. Please understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant.

Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate. After you have read and understood your rights and protection as a human subject in this study, given consent, and have agreed to participate, you will be contacted by the researcher for a telephone interview.

- I agree to participate in the research study under the direction of Ruth Nichols, current doctoral student in the Organizational Leadership program at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. This research study is being advised by Dr. Linda Purrington, Lecturer and Academic Chair for the ELAP program at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. This research study is being conducted as a partial requirement for a doctoral dissertation.

- The overall purpose of this research is to explore the impact, if any, the ELA program has had on your (a) career advancement, (b) career enhancement, (c) personal growth, as well as to solicit suggestions for improving the ELA program.
- My participation in this study will involve me completing a recorded telephone interview consisting of 4 background questions and 6 open-ended questions related to the ELA program and the impact, if any, it has had on my career and personal growth.
- My participation in this study will take approximately 20 minutes, the time it takes to listen and respond to the telephone interview questions. If I consent to participate in the study, I will be contacted with a confirmed day and time for the telephone interview. If, within one week I have not responded, I will receive a reminder email. I understand the timeframe for the study will be from May, 2011 through December, 2011 and that the actual data will be collected between May 23, 2011 through June 11, 2011.
- I understand that although I will not receive direct benefits from participation in this study, the possible benefits from this research will be providing Pepperdine University with meaningful data about the impact, if any, the ELA program has had on the career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth of its graduates and to inform ELA program improvements and development.
- I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. Potential risks and or discomforts might include; feeling social pressure to participate in the study, feeling pressure to participate in the study to be eligible for the raffle prize, fatigue, and or a sense of having been inconvenienced in terms of time demands.
- I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the interview at any time without penalty or loss to benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
- I understand that the investigator will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others.
- I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Ruth Nichols, investigator, about the proposed research, at XXXXXXXXX or Dr. Linda

Purrington, dissertation Chairperson, at XXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXX if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Yuying Tsong, Chairperson of the GSP IRB Committee, Pepperdine University, at XXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXX.

- I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read and understand this informed consent form. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.
- I understand that by clicking “accept” that I agree to willingly participate in this study. If I would also like to download, print, sign, and return a hard copy of my informed consent, I may sign and return this form to the address below. This is optional.

Participant Signature

Date

Participant Printed Name

Return to:
Ruth Nichols
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXX

___ I Accept - I understand the above statements and give my consent to participate in this study.

Page 3

Incentive information

In appreciation for your willingness to participate in this study by completing the telephone interview, you will be given the option to enter your name into a drawing for a \$100 Target e-gift card.

___ I would like to participate in the \$100 Target e-gift card raffle

 ___ Please provide a preferred email address: _____

- The email address provided to the researcher will be held confidential and private, will be known only to the researcher, and will only be used for the purpose of the raffle winner his/her e-gift card. Your email address will not be included as part of the research findings.

___ I do not want to participate in the \$100 Target e-gift card raffle

Page 4

Copy of study findings

___ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of study findings

___ Please provide a preferred email address: _____

- The email address provided to the researcher will be held confidential and private, will be known only to the researcher, and will only be used for the purpose of sending requested study findings. Your email address will not be included as part of the research findings.

___ No, I do not want a copy of study findings

Page 5

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the telephone interview.

Please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Phone number for telephone interview: _____

Preferred email address for interview confirmation: _____

- The email address provided to the researcher will be held confidential and private, will be known only to the researcher, and will only be used for the purpose of scheduling the telephone interview. Your email address will not be included as part of the research findings.

Please choose three (3) days and times that are convenient for you:

1. date/time
2. date/time
3. date/time

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. You will be contacted with a telephone interview confirmation date and time.

APPENDIX G

Telephone Contact Introductory Script

Hello, may I speak with _____?

Hi, my name is Ruth Nichols. I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University working on my dissertation. I am calling you because you are a Pepperdine ELA alumni and I would like to invite you to participate in my study titled, *Career Advancement, Career Enhancement, and Personal Growth of Pepperdine University's Educational Leadership Academy Graduate Program Alumni*. I am interested in your ELA experiences and suggestions and would value your participation in this study. Your participation would help assess the impact the ELA program has had on it's graduates, assist Pepperdine in assessing if the goals of the program are being met, and provide Pepperdine with meaningful data to inform program improvements.

Your participation would involve reading and signing an informed consent form that would review your rights as a participant in the study. Your participation would also involve a telephone interview that consists of 10 questions and lasts about 20 minutes.

Would you be willing to participate in this study?

If no, thank you so much for your time and have a great day.

If yes, thank you so much for helping me with my study. May I please have your current email address so I can send you a direct link to complete the informed consent and schedule your interview?

Thank you so much for helping me with my study. Thank you and have a great day.

APPENDIX H

2003-2006 ELA Graduate Positions Served in Since Graduation

Table H1

2003-2006 ELA Graduate Positions Served in Since Graduation

| Types of Positions | 2003 | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | | <i>n</i> (Total) |
|-------------------------|------|----------------------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|---------------------|
| | | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | |
| District | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | - | - | 1 | 4 | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| Non-Administrative | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| School Site | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | 2 | - | 8 | 2 | 5 | - | 8 | 2 | 27 |
| Non-Administrative | 1 | - | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 24 |
| Non-Education Positions | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Non-Administrative | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 3 |

Note. A number of respondents reported as having served in more than one position since their graduation and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX I

Positions 2003-2006 ELA Graduates are Currently Serving in by Program Location and Graduation Year

Table I1

Positions 2003-2006 ELA Graduates are Currently Serving in by Program Location and Graduation Year

| Education Positions | 2003 | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | 2006 | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | <i>n</i> (Total) | |
|-------------------------|------|----------------------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|---------------------|------|
| | | 2004 | 2005 | | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | | 2006 |
| District | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Non-Administrative | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| School Site | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | 3 | - | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| Non-Administrative | - | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | - | 11 |
| Non-Education Positions | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Non-Administrative | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Unemployed | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 |

APPENDIX J

Reasons 2003-2006 ELA Graduates Chose to Attend Pepperdine University by Program

Location and Graduation Year

Table J1

Reasons 2003-2006 ELA Graduates Chose to Attend Pepperdine University by Program Location and Graduation Year

| Graduate Responses | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Duration/pace of the program | 1 | - | 4 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Quality of the curriculum | - | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | 4 | 1 |
| Reputation of Pepperdine and or the ELA program | - | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | - |
| Referral by friend or colleague | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 |
| Convenient scheduling | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 |
| Convenient location | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - |
| Quality of the professors | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 2 |
| Cohort model | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - |
| Returning alumni | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Small group/personalized instruction | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Other | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Practical application | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one reason for choosing to attend Pepperdine University and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX K

Reasons 2003-2006 ELA Graduates Chose to Enroll in the ELA Program by Program

Location and Year of Graduation

Table K1

Reasons 2003-2006 ELA Graduates Chose to Enroll in the ELA Program by Program Location and Year of Graduation

| Reasons for Enrollment | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|--|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Receive degree and or credential | 1 | - | 7 | 3 | 2 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Career advancement/mobility | - | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 |
| Referral by friend or colleague | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 1 |
| Program structure/curriculum | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - |
| Duration/pace of program | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Learning experience (quality, personalized) | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Reputation of Pepperdine | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Returning alumni | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| Convenient scheduling | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Greater influence on teachers and student learning | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - |
| Small class size | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Cohort model | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Convenient location | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Increase professional skills | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Increase salary | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Diverse student participant backgrounds | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one reason for choosing to enroll in the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX L

Advancement of Professional Career as a Result of Completing the ELA Program by
Program Location and Year of Graduation

Table L1

*Advancement of Professional Career as a Result of Completing the ELA Program by
Program Location and Year of Graduation*

| Graduate Responses | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Advanced to administrative/new leadership position | 1 | - | 3 | 3 | 2 | - | 4 | 1 |
| Increased leadership knowledge, skills (communication, relationship building), and experience | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Appreciated program curriculum | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | - | 3 | 1 |
| External recognition | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 2 | 1 |
| Served in greater capacity | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - |
| Resulted in personal transformation | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | - |
| Uncertain if program advanced career | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| Developed network and enhanced professional relationships | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Provided broader perspective of leadership role and practice | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| Increased salary | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Enhanced personal confidence | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Enhanced confidence in professional skills | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| Provided foundation for doctoral program | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one way in which their careers were advanced as a result of completing the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX M

Enhancement of Professional Career as a Result of Completing the ELA Program by
Program Location and Year of Graduation

Table M1

*Enhancement of Professional Career as a Result of Completing the ELA Program by
Program Location and Year of Graduation*

| | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|--|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration | 1 | - | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Enhanced confidence in professional skills | 1 | - | 6 | 2 | 3 | - | 3 | 2 |
| Career progression | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - |
| Enhanced personal confidence | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| External recognition (peers, employer) | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Developed or enhanced professional relationships | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 1 |
| Uncertain if any enhancement occurred | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Served in greater capacity | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one way their professional career was enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX N

Enhancement of Personal Growth as a Result of Completing the ELA Program by
Program Location and Year of Graduation

Table N1

*Enhancement of Personal Growth as a Result of Completing the ELA Program by
Program Location and Year of Graduation*

| | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|--|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Developed or enhanced professional skills/confidence | - | - | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Developed or enhanced professional growth/goals | - | - | 7 | 3 | 2 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of educational administration | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Appreciated program curriculum | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 3 | 2 |
| Developed or enhanced professional relationships | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | 1 |
| Developed or enhanced personal relationships | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4 | - |
| Felt sense of accomplishment | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Developed or enhanced personal growth/confidence | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one way in which their personal growth has been enhanced as a result of completing the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX O

Overall Strengths of the ELA Program by Program Location and Year of Graduation

Table O1

Overall Strengths of the ELA Program by Program Location and Year of Graduation

| | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Appreciation for program curriculum (i.e. comprehensive, real life application, practicality) | 1 | - | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Appreciation for professors (i.e. caring, personable, knowledgeable) | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | - |
| Appreciation of cohort model | - | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 2 |
| Personal transformation (i.e. discovery of self, personal growth) | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 4 | 1 |
| Greater understanding of/appreciation for the role of Educational Administration | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - |
| Enduring relationships with professors | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Enduring relationships with cohort members | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Small class size | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Diversity of cohort members | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one strength of the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX P

Ideas for Improving the ELA Program by Program Location and Year of Graduation

Table P1

Ideas for Improving the ELA Program by Program Location and Year of Graduation

| Improvement Ideas | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|--|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| No improvement needed | - | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - |
| Focus on daily basic logistics of educational administration (i.e., discipline, finance, ed codes) | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Assist with career/job placement | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| Provide networking opportunities | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Improve enrollment screening | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Focus on a variety of school models (i.e. charter schools, high/low performing schools) | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Improve professor/peer relations | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Improve quality of professors | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Improve coursework | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Improve student preparation of final project/presentation | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| Provide fieldwork at a different school | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Provide opportunities to shadow administrators | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Provide interview process preparation | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| ELA should be a program continuum from a Pepperdine Bachelor's degree program | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Follow up on Alumni career status and future goals | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one idea for improving the ELA program and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX Q

Additions To or Elaborations on Telephone Interview Responses by Campus Location
and Year of Graduation

Table Q1

Additions to or Elaborations on Telephone Interview Responses by Campus Location and Year of Graduation

| | <i>n</i> (Irvine) | | | | <i>n</i> (West Los Angeles) | | | |
|--|----------------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Nothing to add/elaborate on | 1 | - | 3 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| Had a positive experience | - | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Appreciated program curriculum | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | - | 2 | - |
| Appreciated Pepperdine University | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Add more experienced professors | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Tuition was high | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Recommended/encouraged others to enroll in ELA program | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Appreciated professors | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Improve Alumni career/job advancement and placement | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Developed enduring relationships with cohort members | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Improve enrollment screening | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Provide internship opportunities | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Interested in enrolling in doctoral program | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Follow-up on Alumni career status and future goals | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Improve/add to coursework | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Felt sense of achievement | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Need for ELA and doctoral program continuum | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |

Note. A number of respondents reported more than one comment or elaboration and therefore, the total number of responses represented in the table is more than 30.

APPENDIX R

Request for Approval and Permission to Perform Research

Ruth I. Nichols
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX

Dean Margaret Weber, Ph.D.
Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263

Dear Dean Weber:

My name is Ruth I. Nichols and I am an ELA graduate and current dissertation student in Pepperdine University's Organizational Leadership program. Dr. Linda Purrington is my Chair and Dr. Robert C. Paull and Dr. Devin Vodicka are my committee members. I have passed my Preliminary Oral Interview and I am now working on developing my IRB proposal. Part of the IRB proposal entails providing evidence of study permission, which is why I am sending this communication to you.

The primary purpose of my research is to study graduates' perceptions about the impact of their ELA program on their subsequent career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. A second purpose of this study is to obtain their suggestions for improving the program to better prepare graduates for career advancement, career enhancement, and personal growth. I will go through the IRB process to ensure human subject considerations are being met.

I am writing you to ask your approval and permission to perform this research at Pepperdine University and collect data from Pepperdine University alumni while protecting anonymity, keeping responses confidential, and in keeping with IRB guidelines.

My contact information:
Ruth I. Nichols
239 8th Street #3
Seal Beach, CA 90740
(714) 916-3165

Thank you in advance for considering my study for approval.

Sincerely,

Ruth I. Nichols

APPENDIX S

IRB Cover Letter

April 10, 2011

Graduate and Professional School Institutional Review Board (GSP IRB)
c/o Jean Kang
Graduate School of Education & Psychology
Pepperdine University-West Los Angeles Campus
6100 Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045

To the IRB Committee:

I am requesting an Exempt review of my doctoral dissertation proposal titled: Career Advancement, Career Enhancement, and Personal Growth of Pepperdine University's Educational Leadership Academy Graduate Program Alumni. Please be advised that my dissertation committee has approved the proposal and that I have fulfilled the departmental requirement by passing my preliminary oral exam on December 6, 2010.

Permission from Pepperdine University to conduct the study was sought and granted from Dr. Margaret Weber, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology as seen in appendix A.

I have read and I will act in accordance with the ethical principles for human research protections.

To facilitate submission and review of the IRB application, the Pepperdine GPS IRB Initial Application Checklist was followed. Enclosed please find the following items in the order given:

- Cover letter to the GPS IRB (2 copies total, including this page)
- Faculty Supervisor Review Form (2 copies)
- Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Training for Ruth I. Nichols, Principle Investigator (1 copy)
- Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Training for Dr. Linda Purrington, Dissertation Chairperson (1 copy)
- IRB application: Application for a Claim of Exemption and Set of Appendices of Materials Disseminated to the Subjects (2 copies)
 - Appendix A: Letter Granting Permission of Research Study from Dr. Margaret Weber, Dean of GSEP
 - Appendix B: Introductory Email Invitation to ELA Graduates to Participate in Study

- Appendix C: Introduction to Study/Informed Consent
- Appendix D: Telephone Interview Script
- Waiver of Documentation of Informed Consent (2 copies)
 - Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Training for Ruth I. Nichols, Principle Investigator (1 copy)
 - Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Training for Dr. Linda Purrington, Dissertation Chairperson (1 copy)
- Dissertation Proposal (1 copy)

My contact information is as follows:

Mailing address:

Email:

Phone:

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my application. I look forward to your approval.

Sincerely,

Ruth I. Nichols
Principal Investigator
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Educational Leadership Administration and Policy