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Educational Foundations and Research: How Two Program Areas Became One Department

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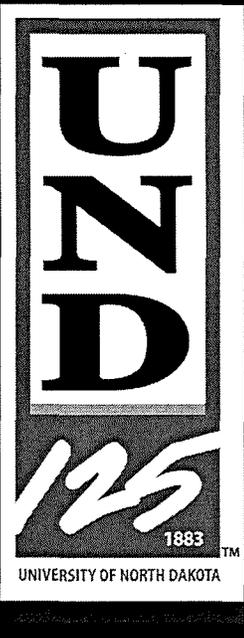
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA : QUASQUICENTENNIAL : DEPARTMENT HISTORY



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
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EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS &
RESEARCH: HOW TWO PROGRAM
AREAS BECAME ONE DEPARTMENT



Sandra Arnau-Dewar



The Department of Educational Foundations and Research at a Founder's Day Ceremony in 1991. From left, front, Dr. Janet Ahler, Dr. Ivan Dahl, Dr. Kathleen Gershman. From left, back, Dr. Richard Landry and Dr. John Williams.

The Department of Educational Foundations and Research:
How Two Program Areas Became One Department

By Sandra Arnau-Dewar

In the beginning, there were two separate program areas: Educational Foundations, and Research Methodologies. Because the two programs were small, then-Dean Mary Harris suggested that the two sections merge. This essay will give a brief biography of the members of each department, and then describe how the two program areas evolved into one new department, Educational Foundations and Research.

Dr. John D. Williams arrived at the University of North Dakota's campus in 1966. When he retired in the fall of 2008, he was in his 43rd year, and his 38th year in the rank of full professor. He has two Ph.D.s, one in statistics and research methodologies (University of Northern Colorado, 1966) and the other in clinical psychology (The

Fielding Graduate University, 1994). He has won the Sigma Xi Award for Individual Excellence in Research (1979), and the Burlington Northern Award for Outstanding Teaching and Faculty Development (1986). He has been the advisor to 33 doctoral graduates, and has served either as a committee member or research advisor to over 1000 graduate students at the University of North Dakota. He served as department chair from 1991 until 1994.

Dr. Williams is one of the most highly published authors at UND, the author of over 300 books, chapters in books, articles and presentations. His articles have appeared in 50 different journals. His research has typically been in statistics or educational research journals, psychology journals, or journals regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In his earlier career, he used multiple linear regression to build multiple comparisons in a linear models format, simplifying their use. Later, he wrote a seminal article, published in *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, on solving the age X cohort X time of measurement problem in a sequence of linear models that simultaneously used all the information in the models, despite many logically missing cells (1991). He later used these models on a large data set that he had collected over 21 years. He found that the effects of the cohort were larger than the effects of aging, suggesting that what has been called the deleterious effects of aging on cognition is significantly over-stated.

In 1997, Dr. Williams and the faculty of EFR recommended changes in the scholarly tools requirement for the Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs. In the past, doctoral committee members had set requirements for a graduate student's scholarly tools. Since

students in the doctoral program are primarily teachers and administrators, Dr. Williams and the EFR faculty felt that it was important for graduates to have experience in both qualitative and quantitative methods. A model was designed that allowed students to choose from three options for scholarly tools.

In 1969, Dr. Richard G. Landry joined the Research Methodologies Program Area. Dr. Landry grew up in New Hampshire and earned his Ph.D. in educational evaluation and research from Boston College. At UND, he taught for his first ten years and became full professor in 1977, then spent the next ten years directing the Bureau of Educational Services and Applied Research. The Bureau, which Vito Perrone describes in his history of the Department of Education, was established in 1921 to “systematically collect and tabulate the results of education tests administered in North Dakota schools” (p. 16). The Bureau is separate from the department of Educational Foundations and Research, and provides employment for graduate students specializing in research. Dr. Landry’s teaching, research, and service to the University were recognized in 1991 when he became the recipient of the Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor award. Dr. Landry was Chairman from 1995 to 2004. In 2005, he received an award as UND’s Outstanding Faculty Advisor. Dr. Landry also served as coordinator of the Teaching and Learning Doctoral program and has chaired innumerable dissertation committees.

In 2000, Dr. Landry created a doctoral program for people living in the Bismarck, North Dakota area. Realizing that educators on the western side of the state were interested in earning a Ph.D., but job and family duties made it impossible for them to reside on UND’s campus to acquire the degree, Dr. Landry prepared a program that brought the doctoral coursework to Bismarck. It uses a cohort model with 25 students

enrolled for four years of weekend classes, all held at Bismarck State College. Since students take classes and progress through the program together, there is an unusually high graduation rate. Twenty-two of the 25 students have already received their Ph.D.s, and two more are expected to finish soon. Students also must attend a one-week seminar for three summers in Grand Forks. A second cohort of 24 students started in 2005.

On the Foundations “side,” the first to arrive was Ivan Dahl, a North Dakota native, who earned his Ed.D. in education at UND in 1968. Although Dr. Dahl was Associate Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning under Dean Vito Perrone from 1972 to 1979, he spent most of his time in the program area of Curriculum and Foundations, becoming Professor in 1976. Dr. Dahl was chairman when the program received the McDermott Award for Departmental Excellence, both in 1991 and again, in 1995. He retired in 2000, and passed away in the spring of 2007. According to Dr. Kathy Gershman, “Ivan was a model professor, a scholar and a gentleman. He was a great mentor to new faculty, like me, in 1984. He was kind and always encouraging. Students loved him.”

Dr. Janet Ahler began her academic career at UND in 1976 and retired as Professor Emerita in 2006. Over the years, she challenged her students to think about minority, ethnic, and multicultural populations in a more discerning manner. Dr. Ahler earned her Ph.D. in Educational Anthropology from the University of Missouri-Columbia and has the following research interests: educational anthropology, cross-cultural education, multicultural/ diversity education, bilingual education, Native American education and qualitative research methods. During her tenure at UND, Dr. Ahler took the leadership in designing the multicultural course requirement for all area-service

teachers in the state of North Dakota. She was given many awards over the years, among them, the North Dakota Multicultural Educator of the Year (1995), the North Dakota Indian Education Association Award (2000), and the UND Rosa Parks Award for Justice and Righteousness (2006).

Dr. Kathleen Gershman began teaching part-time in the Secondary Education Program Area in 1980 and was appointed to a tenure track position in 1984. Dr. Gershman holds an Ed.D. in Teaching, Curriculum, and Learning Environments from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her areas of specialization include: the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, rural schools, especially one-room schoolhouses, curriculum development, adolescent perspectives on the learning environment and qualitative research methods. She co-authored with Donald Oliver, *Education, Modernity and Fractured Meaning: Toward a Process Theory of Teaching and Learning* and authored, *They Always Test Us on Things We Haven't Read: Teen Laments and Lessons Learned*. On Founder's Day in 1990, Dr. Gershman received the Burlington Northern Foundations Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research, Creative Activity and Service, and in 2006 was elected chair of the department. She has chaired 27 doctoral committees and served on over 70 committees.

Dr. Mary Ruth Laycock, another Foundations faculty member, arrived in the late 1990s and retired in 2005. Her interests include: the philosophy and history of education, learning environments, gender education and women's studies.

Discussions on merging Foundations and Educational Research began in the early 1990s, which is evidenced in graduate school catalogs for those years. In the 1989-1991 catalog, "Foundations" and "Research" are two separate program areas, but by the 1997-

1999 catalogs, the two departments were combined and listed as “Educational Foundations and Research;” Dr. Landry is listed as the department’s chair. Drs. Ahler, Gershman, and Laycock did not join the EFR suite on the 3rd floor until 2000. Before that, “Foundations” faculty were on the first floor and “Research” faculty were on the third.

In recent years, younger faculty have replaced retiring faculty members. In 2006, Dr. Marcus Weaver-Hightower, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, was appointed to the department as assistant professor. He has published broadly on issues of boys’ education and was a Fulbright scholar to Australia in 2003. Dr. Weaver-Hightower’s special interests include: curriculum theory, ethnographic analysis, gender and education, sociology of education, and qualitative research methods. His book, *The Politics of Policy in Boys’ Education: Getting Boys “Right”*, will be published in November of 2008.

In 2006, Dr. Steven LeMire, also a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, joined the department as an assistant professor. Dr. LeMire’s area is statistics and educational research. His research interests include statistical argument and experimental design. He is also interested in the efficiency of learning with whole-group and does computer simulation work in the area.

In 2007, Dr. Richard Kahn, a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, joined the department as an assistant professor. His interests include: philosophy of education, ecopedagogy, history of education, media cultural/cultural studies, and sociology of education. Dr. Kahn is the co-editor of three books, *New Paradigms and Methods in Educational and Social Research* (2007), *Description and*

Explanation in Educational and Social Research (2006), and *Theory, Facts and Interpretation in Educational and Social Research* (2004). He co-authored, *The Use of Information-Communication Technologies in Creative Teaching* (2006) and in early 2008, he signed a contract to co-edit a book titled, *Greening the Academy: Environmental Studies in the Liberal Arts*.

New faculty are not just bringing fresh ideas and new momentum to the department, they are also increasing its membership. On July 29, 2007, Harrison Wayne Weaver-Hightower was born, and on September 24, 2007, François Christian LeMire was born. Not to be outdone, Dr. Richard Kahn's family had a baby girl, Zoë Walden Kahn, born on March 14, 2008.

May they live well and prosper.