Proposal for Alternative Doctoral Residency (ADR)

February 2012

Program Name: Social and Cultural Studies
Degree: Ph.D. in Instructional Leadership with a concentration in Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Department of Educational Leadership, Policy and Technology Studies

A. Statement of Need. State the problems with the traditional residency policy for your students and why the graduate faculty in the department want an alternative approved.

Current Graduate School Policy on Residency Requirement:
The student must spend an academic year in continuous residence on the campus of The University of Alabama as a full-time student in the Graduate School or, if specifically approved by the faculty concerned, (a) one spring semester as a full-time doctoral student and the following fall semester as a full-time doctoral student, or (b) a summer (consisting of two terms as a full-time doctoral student), with immediately preceding spring or immediately following fall semester as full-time doctoral student. This requirement can be satisfied only by enrolling in coursework; dissertation or thesis research cannot be used. Courses delivered via IITS, GOALS (online), or QUEST formats may not be used to satisfy residency requirements.

Problems with Policy

We have experienced two unintended consequences of the current policy:

1) Student engagement. There is a noticeable difference in student engagement for students enrolled in six hours of coursework during a semester and students enrolled in nine hours of coursework. Our students, most of whom hold full-time jobs, are actually less engaged in campus life and study during the residency semesters when they are enrolled in nine hours of coursework.

It is our opinion that the current graduate school policy limits the opportunities for our students to engage in a richer and more diverse educational experience as they pursue their doctoral studies. Since the vast majority of our students work full time, coming to campus three evenings a week can be quite onerous. For example, for students with families, it cuts significantly into family time. Thus, students are much less inclined to pursue other academic activities, such as attending talks by guest speakers and following lecture series, on campus with peers outside of class time. Our proposal provides doctoral students with the flexibility to spend more time in their doctoral academic community in these other non-class ways. Having this broader doctoral experience wherein students become members of a scholarly community and not just attenders of class is, we believe, a fundamental purpose of a
doctoral residency requirement. It is to this spirit of residency to which the five value constructs are meant to speak.

2) Disadvantaged workers. Our program disadvantages working adults in the state and across the region who are unable to put their jobs on hold to pursue doctoral study and those who lack the workplace flexibility to negotiate the time off needed to meet the current residency requirements. Unfortunately, these disadvantaged working adults are often the ones most in need of the career change and advancement opportunities that a doctoral degree provides.

Each year we receive inquiries from working adults interested in pursuing doctoral study, who after being informed of the residency requirements, decide that graduate study is not an option for them and who decide not to apply. We also have students who apply, are accepted, and then decide not to attend because of the time requirements of the current residency policy.

A third problem arises with interpretations of “on the campus.” The College of Education runs degree programs at The University of Alabama Gadsden Center. However, coursework taken at the Gadsden Center cannot currently count toward the residency requirement for Ph.D. students. Given that the Social and Cultural Studies courses taught at the Gadsden are the same courses as taught in Tuscaloosa and given that our full-time tenure track faculty travel to Gadsden to teach these courses, the only difference is geographical. The actual classroom experience, content, and contact with faculty are the same. As many of our students live in and around Birmingham, including Gadsden classes in our proposal will offer these students some flexibility. For example, as we follow a slightly different course rotation in Gadsden, students who might be missing a class may be able to take it in Gadsden in the event it is not offered when needed in Tuscaloosa.

Consistent with the University’s vision as a "student-centered research institution," the Social and Cultural Studies concentration in the Instructional Leadership Ph.D. program seeks to support current and future doctoral students who are full-time workers by proposing alternative doctoral residency guidelines. Given that a large majority (approximately 80%) of our current and prospective students and applicants are full-time workers employed by local and regional school systems, educational agencies in the State of Alabama, and other private and public business organizations, we propose an alternative residency policy that provides students with a full doctoral experience while allowing them to maintain a level of employment that does not negatively impact their current livelihood. We expect that approximately 75% of our doctoral students will take advantage of the alternative residency policy.

Specifically, we propose to increase the flexibility of the residency requirement by: 1) allowing students to choose to spread the current 18 hours of required doctoral residency hours across three semesters instead of the traditional two; and 2) allowing
a limited number of existing Gadsden, online/distance, and hybrid courses to be included in the 18 hours of residency coursework.

B. Documentation of how each of the five value constructs will be achieved in the proposed alternative.

A doctoral residency program should fulfill the spirit of residency by featuring all of the following value constructs:

1. **Immersion in advanced study and inquiry.**

   - Students will enroll in 18 hours of graduate level coursework across three consecutive semesters (Fall, Spring, Summer / Spring, Summer, Fall / Fall, Spring, Fall / Spring, Fall, Spring). The 18 hours of coursework must include:
     - no more than 6 hours of online / distance education coursework (including Gadsden Center offerings, courses completely online, and hybrid courses)
     - no more than 3 hours of hybrid or online coursework in a semester (Note: This prohibition excludes Gadsden Center courses offered in face-to-face format.)
     - a minimum of 12 hours of approved coursework on the Tuscaloosa campus, including a minimum of 6 hours of the 12 hour core.

Regarding the first point, this enhances flexibility since these six hours, otherwise, are filled by traditionally delivered on-campus courses. This has proven to be too limiting, especially in the summer when fewer doctoral courses are offered.

Regarding the second point, this precludes the possibility that students could have one of the residency semesters entirely online, which, we believe, would violate the spirit of the residency requirement.

Regarding the third point, having a program core and requiring six hours of the twelve hour core during the residency will help to mimic a cohort model such that students have experiences and a knowledge base in common. This furthers development of a scholarly community. The twelve hour core consists of the following courses:

BEF 644 Philosophy of Science and Its Relation to Educational Research. Three hours. An inquiry into the basic assumptions and principles underlying scientific research in education. Offered spring semester.

AEL 667 Multicultural and Social Education for Leadership Personnel. Three hours. An advanced inquiry into contemporary social and cultural dimensions of education and
their relationships to leadership. Includes issues of diversity, gender, ethnicity, pluralism, and equality.

AEL 681 Ethics and Education. Three hours. Doctoral core course. An exploration and examination of traditional and contemporary ethical issues confronting educational leaders, managers, and teachers at all levels of the educational process. Emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach to foundations in ethical theory and establishing a conceptual framework for the resolution of moral and ethical questions prevalent across the education spectrum.

AEL 669 Curriculum and the Study of Schooling. Three hours. Prerequisite: AEL 620 or permission of the instructor. An inquiry into the curriculum of schooling. Critical analysis of the relationship of curricular decision making to social and political systems and other school context variables is emphasized. Application is made to contemporary issues and problems in school leadership and restructuring.

These coursework requirements and the informal cohort delivery model provide a basis for strong student-faculty and student-student interaction. Furthermore, these courses were specifically chosen for their foundational nature, giving all students a common point of reference for academic engagement and exchange of ideas.

2. Interaction with faculty and peers.

All students in the Social and Cultural Studies program must attend an initial orientation. Additionally, students in the alternative doctoral residency program will be paired with one of the senior, full-time Graduate Assistants in the program in a peer-mentorship. (This is in addition to the assignment of and interaction with a faculty advisor which occurs with all students in the concentration.) The purpose of the SCS Mentoring program is to provide academic guidance and encouragement through close and sustained contact with program faculty and students. To accomplish this goal, every student who has opted to participate in the alternative residency program will be paired with a peer mentor from the SCS program. Peer mentors will be expected to have regular contact with their mentee via email, phone, or in person. During these meetings, peers will discuss such topics as progress towards degree completion, time management, academic writing, academic presentations, conducting ethical research, attending professional conferences, professional development opportunities, completing IRB requirements, and balancing work and family.

Together, the orientation and mentoring program will help to ensure the engagement of all students in scholarly activity, to promote their involvement in a community of scholars, and to integrate them into the culture of the academy.
3. Access to education resources at the University.

Students in the alternative doctoral residency program will have as much access to resources at the University as any other student.

4. Interchange of knowledge with the academic community.

The twelve hours of coursework on the main campus, the peer-mentoring program, and the common knowledge base provided by the program core, will ensure that this occurs. All students are encouraged to attend and/or present at national or regional conferences and we, therefore, include this as one of the measures of academic success (See section C).

5. Broadening of educational and cultural perspectives.

Access to the alternative doctoral residency program will provide local, state and regional students with opportunities to pursue the doctoral degree. A central purpose and foundation of this degree is the broadening of educational and cultural perspectives. These opportunities are available for our students to study and research in international and domestic contexts and adopting the proposed alternative doctoral residency guidelines will support this purpose.

C. Brief description of ongoing measures of academic success of students following the traditional and alternative doctoral residency, which in four years you will present as part of your comparison documenting the success of the two groups of students.

The measures below were chosen since they speak most directly and in overlapping ways to the five value constructs.

- Performance on comprehensive examinations (Value constructs assessed: 1, 3, 4, and 5)
- Publication rates for dissertations (Value constructs assessed: 1, 3, 5)
- Conference/workshop/seminar presentation rates (campus and beyond) (Value constructs assessed: 2, 4, and 5)
- Regular interviews with students to evaluate the mentoring experience.

D. Brief description of the proposed alternative residency that would appear in the Graduate Catalog and/or on the Graduate School website’s list of departments the Council has approved for alternative doctoral residency in addition to traditional residency.

Students pursuing alternative doctoral residency in the Social and Cultural Studies in Education concentration (Instructional Leadership degree with a concentration in Social
and Cultural Studies in Education) will enroll in 18 hours of approved graduate level coursework across three consecutive semesters. The 18 hours of coursework must include six of the twelve hours of the doctoral core on the Tuscaloosa campus. Students may include up to six hours of advisor approved online, distance education, hybrid, and/or Gadsden coursework. Students may not take more than three hours of online or hybrid instruction in a single semester during the residency period.