Executive Summary: During my visit I met with all the professors in the departments of higher education and educational leadership. I had separate meetings with the department chairs as well as the dean of the school of education. In addition, I spent a significant amount of time with graduate students in each department and also some of the other external reviewers. Some of the reviewers were from Texas Tech and some were from other universities. A special effort was made by Dr. Melanie Hart to make my stay comfortable as she arranged much of my transportation and directed me to many of my meetings.

Program Overview and Vision: It seems that the faculty in both departments are very collegial and supportive of the mission. One of the things that I kept hearing over and over was Texas Tech's dedication to 40 by 20 (40,000 students by 2020). I did not hear any examples of how either the Educational Leadership or the Higher Education department planned to support that vision. Perhaps it is their limited role in only dealing with graduate students that shapes their vision; however, I felt that the faculty in general lacked new ideas in how to support that mission. When the subject of internationalization of the campus was broached, only the higher education department had any ideas in how they would recruit international students. The educational leadership department did not give me the impression that they thought international students would even want to come to Texas Tech. While this may not be something that is feasible in their department, I was disappointed in the lack of new ideas coming from each department in regard to student recruitment. From the educational leadership standpoint, it seemed that they just kind of threw up their hands at the fact that enrollment was declining. This was blamed on the local universities as well as online universities that have poached their students. One professor in educational leadership spoke of a student that called and asked about the price of the program and nothing else. This professor gave me the impression that there was nothing that could be done. In cases such as these, I think it would be important to look at the other competing programs, see what they are doing, and see if there is something that can be done to make the Texas Tech educational leadership program more competitive—without sacrificing quality. The area where I think that the programs are excelling is in the area of distance education and cohorts. It seems that both programs have a firm grasp of how to make enrollment grow by taking things outside of Lubbock and delivering a strong, rigorous program via distance/online/hybrid educational programs. The faculty members seem very supportive of each other in this endeavor.

Rating: Very Good for both programs
Faculty Productivity: Based on the information I received, I believe that from the standpoint of faculty scholarship and service that both programs have faculty that are dedicated to working with each other and improving in these areas. Each of the faculty members’ vitas demonstrates strong publication records and commitment to service-oriented duties. The educational leadership faculty has a strong bond with the local school districts and see themselves as gatekeepers of the profession. The one glaring area that I see hindering faculty productivity is from the standpoint of program coordinators. There was a universal animosity toward the role of program coordinators in regards to how time-consuming it was and how much it hindered productivity. The program coordinator role was described as very labor-intensive. While concise solutions to the problem weren’t presented by any faculty, I felt that what was needed was an administrative support person who could take these duties from the faculty so they could concentrate more on just being a faculty member and the roles that accompanied that position. On the other hand, it was contradictory for faculty in both departments to admit that their enrollment had decreased yet that they still felt stifled by the role of program coordinator. Based on what I heard during my interviews, I feel that it is imperative to look at the program coordinator role in each department because it is clearly not working.

As for the tenure process, all the relatively new professors felt like they were provided support and direction in relation to the tenure process. The faculty of educational leadership felt that student recruitment was a very large portion of their job description; however, they weren’t sure if that was counted very significantly in tenure and promotion. These professors did believe that new professors were protected and that the college encouraged them to be successful.

An unfortunate comment echoed by the faculty in both departments was that there existed a pressure to teach more courses and enroll more students and that the “situation is at an untenable point.” They also believed that the program coordinator needed an administrative secretary. The role of the program coordinator in relation to the administrative duties requested seemed like a very controversial point of contention in both programs.

A glaring contradiction that I heard during my conversation with educational leadership faculty was when one professor said that they were overloaded and yet another professor said that they were subsidizing the superintendent program. Since the subsidization of a particular program inherently means that the enrollment is low, then I don’t see how both of these statements can be true.

Rating: Very Good for both programs

Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates: During my talks with graduate students I got the impression that all the students were very satisfied with their programs. Any complaints were related to very particular aspects of the program that could easily be fixed. Overall I felt that graduate students were happy
with their choice of program and did not regret any decision they had made in relation to it.

From the higher education standpoint, the graduate students felt that the programs were not segregated and that they worked well with each other. They also felt that the breadth of curriculum was strong and that there was a lot of communication between faculty. Students appreciated the fact that faculty had practical/real world experience that was applicable to their field. Finally, they all agreed that the option to have a choice between comps or a thesis was appreciated.

From the educational leadership standpoint, the graduate students felt that the professors were open and personal. They also felt like they were treated like professionals—especially since the majority of the students were already working professionals. I got the impression that there existed a more collegial type of relationship between these students and their professors because the majority of these students were already in high-level positions within their school district and they felt like the professors treated them with the respect that they had earned. These students also appreciated the flexibility to be able to choose their dissertation. They felt like the faculty was not so focused on research that they were looking for cronies to advance their own research agenda. The students in educational leadership also appreciated the strong partnerships that existed between the department and the local school districts of which many of the students were currently employed.

**Rating: Excellent for both programs**

**Curriculum and Programs of Study:** The degree requirements of both departments are sufficient. The department of educational leadership serves a lot of non-traditional students and students who only need principal and/or superintendent certification, therefore that is always going to be an element of data that is skewed based on the traditional model of looking at things.

Each department seems to have a firm grasp of how to integrate a blended course into the curriculum and how to successfully integrate online elements of instruction into the curriculum. The full-time working professionals in each program truly appreciated the flexibility of blended courses. I believe that these types of alternative styles of delivery only enhance enrollment as well as the student experience.

Some of the educational leadership graduate students were slightly frustrated with the balance between face-to-face instruction and online instruction. They unanimously agreed that they never wanted their entire program to be completely online because they felt that they needed the human element because it was important.
There exists a significant flaw in the masters level research course being taught for the masters students in higher education. Apparently there is a required course being taught to these students that is described by multiple students as “inadequate,” “painful,” and “a sad excuse for a course.” The instructor of this course seems to be the main reason that this course is causing so much discontent. I feel as if this problem should be addressed immediately since the discontent is so universal.

Students in educational leadership felt adequately prepared for their coursework. They felt the curriculum was very orderly and made sense in the sequence in which they took it.

**Rating:** Educational Leadership=Excellent  
Higher Education=Very Good

**Facilities and Resources:** During my tour of the college of education I noticed many pleasing things. The curriculum library was a very busy place with a very helpful staff. I witnessed a professor in the process of recording a lecture and many students performing research. The computer lab was fantastic. I noticed many Apple work stations and by my calculations it appeared that quite a bit of money was invested in the lab. I did not get a chance to see anything outside of the college of education, but based on what I saw, I believe that the resources available to students from a technology and curriculum standpoint were excellent. I can only hope that all students take advantage of these opportunities.

**Rating:** Excellent for both departments

**Conclusion:** I’m sure it is apparent by this point that I have given high ratings to each department in all the areas, yet I have spent a significant amount of time pointing out critical problems that exist within each department. In my role as external reviewer I feel that these two elements of my report are not contradictory. The impression I get from the faculty is that they are happy and willing to work together to improve their situations. It appears to me that the effort is there to make things better; however, I see some deep issues that exist between the administration and the faculty, especially when it concerns the role of program coordinators.

I would encourage the educational leadership faculty to put more emphasis in trying to compete directly with the sub-par universities that are stealing their students without sacrificing quality of instruction.

Finally, I feel compelled to add that in regards to the higher education department, that I feel that this evaluation is not quite appropriate since they had one faculty member in 2008 and now they have four faculty members. Obviously this department is in a major transition and despite the best efforts of the new faculty
members; there will still be quite a few bumps in the road. I believe that a proper evaluation of this particular department might be needed again in about three years.