I have reviewed the materials provided to me for this graduate review, and visited the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership from February 16 to 18, 2011. I was asked to focus on the Educational Psychology, Counselor Education, and Special Education programs. During my campus visit I met with the Clifford Fedler, Associate Dean of the Graduate College, William Lan, Department Chair, Hansel Burley, Associate Dean of Graduate Education and Research, Larry Hovey, Director of Assessment, Peggy Johnson, Interim Dean, program coordinators, faculty members, graduate students, and the internal review committee. I was also given a tour of the College of Education. All the individuals whom I encountered were cordial, as well as forthcoming, in their responses to any questions that were asked.

Program Overview and Vision
Many of the activities of the department are in response to two pressures coming from the university -- to attain “Tier I” research status and to increase graduate enrollment. For the period of the review, faculty members were asked to increase their grant getting, as well as recruit and teach larger numbers of graduate students.

The programs that I reviewed seem to be functioning exceptionally well given these pressures. However, several faculty members expressed concerns that I think are worth emphasizing. The overall sense from faculty was that programs cannot continue to grow without additional faculty lines. They recognize that there is a point at which growth is no longer possible without sacrificing quality, and they do not want to reach that point. In addition, faculty members currently feel that there is a sense of comradery within the College, but are worried that infighting may begin as resources are tightened and demands on faculty increased. They feel that college administrators will need to help the college remain a cohesive, cooperative unit.

I was impressed with the positive attitude and high morale of the faculty members given the increases in program sizes and productivity experienced over the past six years. It is important for university, college, and departmental administrators to ensure that adequate resources and support are provided to sustain the continued fulfillment of growth and productivity goals.

Overall score: Excellent

Faculty Productivity
The number of refereed publications for EP&L has tripled over the review period, the number of books or book chapters has almost doubled, and presentations have increased 60%, providing evidence that the faculty have heeded the call for greater research productivity. During the same period, the department increased in size by only 11% (with four new full-time faculty members).
Given the typical length of time between submission of an article and publication, and the relatively small increase in number of faculty members, these increases are impressive.

In addition, the percentage of faculty who are involved in publication activities has increased over the review period. In 2004, 48% of faculty members were contributing to the department’s research productivity, with that percentage increasing to 74% in 2009. In 2009, those faculty members who were contributing to research productivity published an average of three articles. If publication rate is calculated for all members of the department, rather than just those who had published that year, the average publication rate per faculty member was two articles in 2009.

Further evidence for increased faculty productivity comes from external awards. The number of external awards received by EP&L increased by 54% over the review period, with revenue generated by grants increasing 124%.

Many of the concerns expressed by the faculty during the faculty meeting revolved around issues related to external funding. One concern is that requirements for obtaining external funding have increased, but the tenure and review process has not been updated to take this into account. The faculty would like consensus from the Dean’s office in terms of how grant-getting activity figures into tenure decisions and workload. Two suggestions from faculty were to consider grant proposal writing as “scholarly activity,” even if the proposals are not funded, and to consider granting writing whose primary purpose is to provide support for graduate students as scholarship.

The self-study document indicates that the COE recently hired a grants administrator, and I suggest that the COE establish a grant and research support center, run by permanent staff. While this obviously requires a commitment of resources, it is likely to have a direct effect on grant submissions and faculty productivity.

Another concern related to faculty productivity is that program coordinators have no power or secretarial support, but a growing number of administrative responsibilities. This is in part because demands for reporting and assessment activities have increased institution-wide. Faculty members suggested that a College reorganization is needed to provide more direct administrative support to programs.

The Counselor Education and Special Education programs are regularly required to undergo re-accreditation from professional organizations, placing heavy demands on faculty time. One suggestion from faculty members is that the COE Assessment Center provide greater assistance for the accreditation process. Accreditation responsibilities are time intensive activities for faculty members and any support is likely to result in greater faculty productivity.

**Overall score:** Excellent

**Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates**

The number of Special Education M.A. degrees has tripled during the review period, while the number of Ph.D. degrees has remained fairly constant. Total Special Education graduate enrollment increased 83%.
The number of Ph.D. degrees in Counselor Education has remained constant over the review period, while the number of M.A. degrees doubled between AY 2004-5 and 2005-6, then gradually declined by AY 2009-2010 to the 2004-5 level. Counselor Education graduate enrollment has decreased steadily since 2004-5. In an effort to increase enrollment, Counselor Education is collaborating with West Texas A&M to transition M.A. students from West Texas A&M into the Ph.D. program at TTU.

The number of Educational Psychology graduate degrees is relatively low within the department and has remained fairly constant. Educational Psychology has increased graduate enrollment slightly, but this does not yet seem to have led to an increase in graduate degrees. In an effort to increase enrollment, Educational Psychology has started its first cohort of students with an emphasis in School Psychology.

It is difficult to compare enrollment and graduation figures to peer institutions because most of the data from peer institutions are not reported at the program level, but program size seems high for Counselor Education and Special Education, and typical-to-high for Educational Psychology.

The percentage of enrolled graduate students who are non-white, U.S. students for the Special Education, Counselor Education, and Educational Psychology programs are 19%, 19%, and 13%, respectively. I do not know what goals exist for graduate student diversity at the College or University level, so I cannot judge the adequacy of these figures.

GRE scores of enrolled graduate students in all three programs are slightly below average for students taking the GREs (955, 971, and 879 for Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, and Special Education, respectively). After one year in their program of study, student GPAs for all three programs indicate that students are doing well in their courses.

Time to degree for Ph.D. and M.A. students in Educational Psychology is 2.07 and 5.64 years, and for Special Education it is 2.36 and 4.37 years. These figures seem typical. Time to degree for Counselor Education is significantly longer (9.8 years for Ph.D. degrees and 4.25 for M.A. degrees). This is due to the fact that almost all students enrolled in Counselor Education are employed full-time during their tenure as students.

Initial job placement for graduates is impossible to assess given the relatively few students for whom data was provided by program. However, there has been a 540% increase in scholarly publications and presentations by graduate students in EP&L across the review period, while total graduate enrollment has only increased 4%. Presumably part of this increase in productivity is due to student participation in growing number of faculty research activities.

During the meeting with faculty, many concerns were raised about the recruitment and application process. In order to increase program sizes, faculty members are having difficulty finding the time that is needed for recruitment and to shepherd students through the application process. While progress has been made at the college level in streamlining the application process, faculty felt that greater infrastructure support from the COE was necessary to maintain recruitment efforts. A staff person at departmental level (or shared between several programs)
who is responsible for student recruitment and student applications is highly desirable. There were concerns that the Department of Curriculum and Instruction has recruiters and advisors that EP&L does not, and this may result in a disparity in the distribution of graduate student funding.

Graduate funding is currently available on a first-come first-served basis. Several faculty members expressed concern that some programs get more than their share of those resources. This suggests that a move to a system in which graduate funding is divided among programs may be desirable.

*Overall score:* Good

**Curriculum and Program of Study**

Courses offered by the faculty in EP&L are highly subscribed and student evaluations of instruction in EP&L are above the university average for all years of the review. The COE ranked second among traditional colleges at TTU for “student evaluation of instructor” and “student evaluation of course.” For AY 2009-10, average ratings for “overall rating of your graduate education experience“ for the Special Education, Counselor Education, and Educational Psychology programs were 4.73, 4.44, and 4.33, respectively, on a scale of 1 to 5.

EP&L is a leader at TTU in developing distance education programs, with two online M.A. programs, one in Special Education and IT, and an online Ed.D. program in Higher Ed. Educational Psychology has online versions of all core courses and research methods courses, which are heavily subscribed from students around the university. Faculty members pointed out that online courses are not designed to meet universal design standards, and this creates a serious problem for their students with disabilities. In addition, the email system utilized by the university is not universally accessible. This is a particular problem for online courses and programs as these usually involve little to no face-to-face interaction. This is an issue that needs to be addressed, as there are state and federal accessibility requirements.

I was not provided with information about programs of study for individual programs, however, no concerns were raised by faculty or students. My own observation is that the semester hours required for a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Special Education (91 and 93, respectively) seem quite high. (The required hours for Counselor Education were not reported.) For example, at the University of Iowa, only 72 semester hours of coursework are required for a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. A reduction in semester hours might help ease some of the pressures that faculty members are experiencing.

Overall, from my meeting with students in the Educational Psychology, Special Education, and Counselor Education programs, students seem to feel that they were being well mentored by faculty members and that apprenticeship-type relationships exist between faculty and students. There was a request for more advanced statistics courses being offered on a more regular basis, however, this seemed to be a concern of relatively few students.

*Overall score:* Excellent
Facilities and Resources
The COE moved into a new building in 2002 with classroom space, meeting space, and lab facilities. This facility has up-to-date technology for instructional use, including SmartBoard rooms and rooms with interactive videoconferencing for distance education courses. Office space for faculty seems adequate; I did not observe or collect any information about graduate student office space.

Overall score: Excellent

Conclusions
The trajectory for EP&L is quite positive. The department has increased graduate enrollment at the same time that it has increased research productivity, with only a modest increase in resources. However, it is important for university, college, and departmental administrators to ensure that adequate resources are provided to sustain this trajectory. Specific recommendations are:

1. Establish a COE grant and research support office, run by permanent staff. This office would provide support both for the conceptualization, submission, and maintenance of external grants. Colleges that have created grant support centers typically see a direct impact on grant submissions and faculty productivity.

2. Hire a staff person at the departmental level (or a position shared between several programs) who is responsible for student recruitment and student applications. Many faculty expressed concern about the amount of time required to recruit students and to help applicants through the application process. Much of the support that applicants need does not require faculty expertise, but could be handled more efficiently by a staff person.

3. Create new faculty lines as graduate programs increase in size.

4. The Dean’s office should review the role that obtaining external grants plays in the promotion and tenure process. In particular, consensus should be reached about what is considered scholarship.

5. Consider lowering the required semester hours for a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, Special Education, and Counselor Education. Clearly accreditation requirements need to be taken into account, but it is worth investigating semester hour requirements at peer institutions.