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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine: (1) the nature of the positions held by professors of general curriculum and the terms of their employment; (2) their educational and experiential backgrounds; (3) their current academic responsibilities; (4) the number of doctoral students graduating from their general curriculum programs in the next three years; and (5) the problems these professors face in carrying out their work in general curriculum. (Authors)

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THE GENERAL CURRICULUM PROFESSORIATE

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THE GENERAL CURRICULUM PROFESSORIATE

At the same time that information was being obtained about the job market for curriculum specialists in higher education, a related survey was conducted to obtain information regarding the status of persons now holding professorships in general curriculum in higher education. In the absence of empirical data on this topic, it is difficult to know what the professoriate in general curriculum is like, what academic programs they provide, and what impact they are having across the country. Data pertaining to these concerns would not only provide a basis for understanding the current status of this academic specialty, but it would also serve as a basis of comparison with the results of any future survey taken of the status of the general curriculum professoriate in higher education.

In general, it is of value both to professors in this academic specialty and to their departmental and college administrators to have a wider understanding of curriculum professors' work and circumstances than is possible from the perspective of a single institution. With this in mind, a nationwide survey of general curriculum professorships was undertaken to ascertain information that could be used to construct an overall profile of those holding such positions during 1977-78 and to develop a composite picture of what they do and the problems they face.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine (1) the nature of the positions held by professors of general curriculum and the terms of their employment; (2) their educational and experiential backgrounds; (3) their current academic responsibilities; (4) the number of doctoral students graduating from their general curriculum programs in the next three years; and (5) the problems these professors face in carrying out their work in general curriculum.

The Questionnaire and the Population Surveyed

A 33-item questionnaire was developed dealing specifically with topics such as contracts and salary; areas of doctoral preparation and greatest expertise; time spent in teaching, research, and service; titles of courses taught; program and advising responsibilities; doctoral graduates; and problems faced. This questionnaire was designed to be answered by the senior general curriculum faculty member in the same institutions being surveyed regarding vacancies in general curriculum, as reported in the companion study entitled, "The Job Market for Curriculum Specialists in Higher Education." The Deans in these ninety-five institutions having doctoral programs in general curriculum were provided a copy of the faculty questionnaire and were requested to ask their senior professor in general curriculum to respond to and return the questionnaire. Seventy-three of the ninety-five questionnaires (77%) were returned. The institutions in which these respondents hold positions can be classified by type (58 public, 15 private), location (44 urban, 29 nonurban), size of student body (2 under 5,000; 8 - 5 to 10,000; 18 - 10 to 20,000; 26 - 20 to 30,000; 19 above 30,000), and region of the country (NE - 9, SE - 17, NC - 28, SC - 9, NW - 2, SW - 7).

Profile of the Responding General Curriculum Professors

Positions and Terms of Employment

The total number of respondents was 73. Of these, 36 are Full Professors, 1 is Research Professor, 23 are Associate Professors, 6 are Assistant Professors, 7 are of unknown rank. 30% are the only Professor of Curriculum in their institution; 26% have 3 others; 15% have 2 others; and 10% have 1 other. 99% hold full-time positions. 85% are tenured. Contracts are held for 9 months of the year by 41%, for 9 months plus summers by 19%, for 10 months by 19%, and for 12 months by 12%. Total salaries for the 1976-77 year were

\$20 - 25,000 for 38%, \$25 - 30,000 for 26%, above \$30,000 for 20%, and \$15 - 20,000 for 11%. Salary increases in 1977-78 over 1976-77 were \$1,000 to 1,500 for 28%, \$1,500 to 2,000 for 20%, \$500 to 1,000 for 15%, less than \$500 for 14%, \$2,000 - 2,500 for 10%, over \$3,000 for 5%, and \$2,500 - 3,000 for 4%. 79% of the institutions have provisions for sabbatical leave; 41% after 7 years; 16% after 6 years; and one year leaves are the most common (15%) although for 47% neither a semester, a quarter, or a year is the standard length. 50% of salary is the most common pay for 10%. 41% are in academic units called "Curriculum and Instruction;" however, 24 other unit names were reported, indicating placement often in units having little or nothing to do with curriculum or instruction.

Educational and Experiential Background

59% were prepared in General Curriculum doctoral programs, 8% in Educational Administration, 5% in Elementary Education, 4% in Secondary Education, 12% in others. 37% did not work as General Curriculum practitioners prior to service in higher education; 14% worked 5 or 6 years; 12% worked 3 or 4 years; 11% worked 9 or 10 years. 30% have been in their present professional position between 6 and 10 years; 27% for 0 to 5 years; 25% for 11 to 17 years; and 18% for 18 years or more. 48% consider themselves expert in Secondary Curriculum, 46% in Curriculum Design, 42% in Curriculum Theory, 40% in Curriculum K-12, 25% in Curriculum Evaluation, 18% in Curriculum K-6, 14% in Curriculum Inquiry. 84% are ASCD members. 49% are AERA - Division B members. 32% are members of Professors of Curriculum.

Academic Responsibilities

44% spend 50-75% of the time teaching, program planning, or advising; 27% spend 75-100% on these, 25% spend 26-50%. 41% spend under 10% on research or publications; 27% spend 10-25%; 15% spend no time; 12% spend 25-50%. 42% spend under 10% in service activities without additional pay; 26% spend no time; 25% spend 10-25%. 47% do not engage in service activities

with additional pay; 41% spend under 10% of their time in this way.

30% spent 51-75% of their teaching time in 1976-77 in teaching General Curriculum Courses, 29% spent 75-100%, 22% spend 25-50%, and 18% spent 0-25% of their time this way. The 73 respondents reported teaching a total of 188 general curriculum courses during 1976-77. Courses taught in Curriculum K-12 numbered 35 of 18.6% of the total; 52% of the respondents never taught this. 31 courses in Curriculum Theory (16%) were taught; 58% of the respondents never taught this. 30 courses in Secondary Curriculum - 7 to 12 (16%) were taught; 59% of the respondents never taught this. 29 courses in Curriculum Design (15.4%) were taught; 60% never taught this. 15 in Elementary Curriculum K-6 (8%) were taught; 79% never taught this. 12 courses in Curriculum Evaluation (6%) were taught; 84% never taught this. 11 courses in Curriculum Inquiry (6%) were taught; 85% never taught this. 25 (13%) other general curriculum courses were taught, including titles such as Leadership, Curriculum Administration, Curriculum History, and Curriculum Innovation. 52 courses classified as non-general curriculum courses were taught by these same 73 respondents; this is 22% of the total (240) courses taught (general curriculum and non-general curriculum). Only 29% of the respondents did not teach non-general curriculum courses. Among titles in this group are Practicum in Performance Based Education, Philosophical Foundations of Education, Social Studies Education, Introduction to Research, Science Education, Principalship, Hispanic Education, Measurement and Evaluation of Instruction. 43% do not teach non-resident courses; 29% teach non-resident courses as an overload with extra compensation; 16% teach such courses in their regular load.

90% teach doctoral students; 90% teach masters students; 61% teach specialist degree students. 77% are major advisors to doctoral students; 4-6 students being the number mentioned most often. 69% are major advisors to

masters students, the number mentioned most often being between 4 and 15. 29% advise undergraduate students. 27% advise specialist degree students. 72% do not advise outside general curriculum.

Doctoral programs with which the 73 respondents work are oriented for only 1% exclusively toward the preparation of professors and researchers in general curriculum. For 18% the programs are oriented only toward the preparation of general curriculum practitioners. For 42% the programs are oriented toward both of these combined in the same program. For 23% they are oriented toward both but they are distinguished from each other.

Publications and other scholarly presentations center on Curriculum K-12 for 22%, on theory for 18%, on 7-12 for 15%, on Design, Instruction, and Evaluation for about 14%, on Inquiry for 8%.

Consulting centers on Curriculum Development for 34% and on Instruction for 25%, on Curriculum K-12 for 19%, and on Evaluation for 16%.

Doctoral Graduates Produced

A total of approximately 260 doctoral students will graduate in General Curriculum each year for the next three years (1978, 1979, 1980).

Problems Reported

32% reported a lack of college support for general curriculum. 32% reported feeling pressure to generate credit hours to justify faculty positions. 30% expressed difficulty in placing graduates in college positions. 27% felt they had too heavy an advising load. No one reported expecting his/her position to be eliminated. A number of other problems in individual institutions were volunteered by the respondents, including such things as organizational problems, favoritism (to others), enrollment declines, need for additional faculty in general curriculum at the same time there is little likelihood of such additions.

Interpreting this Survey of the General Curriculum Professoriate

The facts established by this survey do not lend themselves to any particular interpretation. Because the survey encompassed only one professor in each institution, the facts cannot be interpreted as applying to the whole of the general curriculum professoriate. These seventy-three respondents reported a total of 162 other general curriculum colleagues in their own institutions, and no doubt there are others in institutions that were not included in the survey. To obtain a complete picture of the professoriate in this specialty, it will be necessary to conduct a much more thorough survey than is reported here.

Some of the findings of this study are worthy of being pointed up in relation to other facts because of their special interest or significance:

- (1) In the institutions surveyed, a large number of general curriculum professors (30%) have no other general curriculum colleague in the same institution despite the fact that all these institutions offer doctoral programs in curriculum.
- (2) A large number of respondents (32%) report a lack of support for general curriculum despite the fact that all seventy-three offer doctoral programs in curriculum.
- (3) While approximately 260 doctoral students will graduate in general curriculum each year for the next three years (1978, 1979, 1980), 30% of the respondents expressed difficulty in placing graduates in College positions, 19% expressed difficulty in placing graduates in school positions, 11% indicated generalists often had to take positions as specialists, and 7% said graduates often had to take positions for which they were not specifically prepared. (No inference should be drawn that these percentages or their totals necessarily

represent the same institutions in any case.) The survey of vacancies anticipated in higher education for general curriculum professors, as reported in the companion study, indicates that a limited number of higher education positions will be available in the near future in this specialty. Anticipated positions in schools was not surveyed, so it is impossible to say whether the availability of this kind of position for the general curriculum doctoral graduate will be limited or not.

- (4) The fact that no respondent reported expecting his/her position to be eliminated (for whatever reasons) is quite surprising given the fiscal exigencies in many universities at the present time and given the expression of lack of college support for general curriculum in 32% of the respondents' institutions. On the other hand, there was frequent mention of the need for additional general curriculum professors to augment the current work force in this specialty at a time when it was recognized that there is little likelihood that these needed positions will be authorized.
- (5) 41% of those now engaged in the General Curriculum Professoriate were not prepared by their own doctoral study in the general curriculum specialty. 78% of the total number of courses taught by these professors fall within general curriculum and 22% lie outside. It is quite apparent from these figures and from data on individual respondents that the teaching of either type course does not necessarily parallel their academic preparation in terms of their doctoral specialty. It was not possible to interpret the data to show how many taught strictly within their specialty, but of course this occurred in numerous instances.

Considerations for Further Study of the General Curriculum Professoriate

The study reported here provides only a beginning understanding of the General Curriculum Professoriate nationwide. A survey of the entire professoriate in this specialty would not be too difficult to undertake and could provide a much more complete and accurate profile than was possible from this limited study. To our knowledge, such a study has not been previously attempted and would, if undertaken, provide needed information on the status of this essential specialty within the more general Educational Professoriate.

This initial effort has indicated that certain basic data can be readily obtained. It has also suggested some questions arising from the facts juxtaposed in the previous section that might be explored in depth in terms of explanatory hypotheses. Whether for the general interest of those engaged in this specialty or for more practical reasons associated with institutional equity or with the academic contribution of an essential Education specialty, a study of the General Curriculum Professoriate will be indeed worthwhile.