Ensuring Strong Leadership
For Our Nation’s Schools:
Sessions Featuring
Wallace Foundation Supported Research

As leadership preparation faculties contemplate the future of their work, they face an important challenge in providing programs that can develop leaders with the skills to support the learning of all students. In response, organizations like UCEA and the Wallace Foundation have devoted significant attention to increasing quality and innovation in leadership preparation programs in order to address this complex challenge. During the UCEA Annual Convention, two convention sessions and two workshops will showcase research and program development work commissioned by the Wallace Foundation.

Wallace Foundation: Educational Leadership Sessions

Over the past ten years, the Wallace Foundation has invested significant resources into a variety of research and leadership preparation developments across the country. Several studies have recently concluded or will be concluding, providing a rich array of insights, research findings, and program models. The following two sessions were designed to showcase work focused on educational leadership and commissioned by the Wallace Foundation.

Wallace Strand Session I: Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning
(Session 6 – Friday, 9:40am – 11:00am) Featuring: Karen Seashore Louis, University of Minnesota and Kayla Wahlstrom, University of Minnesota

The largest in-depth study of school leadership to date, this report gathers and analyzes quantitative data confirming that education leadership has a strong impact on student achievement, as measured by student test scores. The study shows that leadership makes its mark largely by strengthening a school’s “professional community” – an environment where teachers work together to improve classroom instruction. It also finds that rapid turnover of principals reduces student achievement. In addition, the study shows that although the principal remains the central source of leadership in schools, he or she is far from the only source. Indeed, the highest performing schools operate by a “collective leadership” that involves many interested players – including parents and teachers – in decision-making.

Wallace Strand Session II: Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Action and Program Approaches from Eight Urban Districts
(Session 14 – Saturday, 8:10am – 9:30am) Featuring: Terry Orr, Bank Street College and Cheryl King, EDC

This multi-case evaluation study explored the investments of eight urban school districts in school leadership preparation, particularly their approaches, role of local universities, and perceived effectiveness of graduates as new school leaders. The results showed that by behaving as consumers—in creating their own programs, setting standards or partnering with or influencing the quality of university programs—districts improved the quality of program candidates and graduates, increased the number of qualified aspiring leaders, and ensured that program curricula address district needs. Most districts and

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universities redesigned leadership preparation as a multi-staged, progressively selective learning progression, combining formal preparation with district-focused seminars and lengthy, full-time internships, leading to initial leadership positions. A growing body of research indicates that the certain core program attributes, such as a well-defined, leadership-for-learning focus, coherence, student-centered instructional practices, a cohort structure, substantive internships and district partnerships, are more likely to result in well prepared educational leaders.

Wallace Workshop I: University-District Partnerships Supporting Exemplary Leadership Preparation (Session 21 – Sunday, 8:00am -10:00 am) Featuring Margaret Terry Orr, Bank Street College; Diane Rutledge, Large Unit District Association (former superintendent, Springfield Public Schools, Il); Valerie Annear, Springfield Public Schools (MA); Paula Cordeiro, University of San Diego; Rich Thome, University of San Diego; Rose Linda Martinez, University of San Diego.

Research on effective leadership preparation identified several key program features in preparing strong educational leaders, including strong partnerships with schools and districts. Wallace Foundation researchers, Terry Orr, Cheryl King and Michelle LaPointe found that through university partnerships, districts could influence candidate selection, customize content, instructional methods, internships and assessment practices. The findings showed that by leveraging the collective capacity of both the district and the university, through both formal (such as contracts and agreements) and informal relationships, they could create high quality, sustainable programs that produced more leadership-ready candidates. In this session participants will receive the newest Wallace Report (available Oct 25) focused on a range of partnerships and the programs they created. They will have an opportunity to learn how to develop and sustain university-district partnerships in their own communities by working with district and university program directors who created partnerships from the ground up.

Wallace Workshop II: Developing Purposeful and Coherent Leadership Preparation Curriculum (Session 22 – Sunday, 10:00am -12:00pm) Featuring: Paula Cordeiro, University of San Diego; Margaret Terry Orr, Bank Street College; Rich Thome, University of San Diego; Rose Linda Martinez, University of San Diego.

Among the central features of effective preparation is “a clear sense of purpose for student learning” that is coherently woven through program goals, content, learning activities, internships and assessments. Wallace Foundation researchers Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr and Cohen (2007) found that programs with well defined and well integrated theories of action for learning are more likely to promote adult learning and leadership development for aspiring school leaders. Their results showed more effective leadership and school improvement work. In this session participants will receive a copy of Wallace sponsored research highlighting the relationship between purposeful program models and exemplary leadership practices. Additionally, participants will have an opportunity to discuss and participate in curriculum design exercises that reflect this research.

To access the research highlighted in these series and other valuable resources, please visit the Wallace Foundation Knowledge Center at http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KNOWLEDGECENTER/Pages/default.aspx