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CHICAGO STATE AWARDS FIRST-EVER DOCTORATES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

(CHICAGO) - In a landmark first for the University, three Chicago State University students were conferred doctoral degrees in educational leadership during the school’s biannual commencement ceremonies spring and fall, 2009.

Dr. Carol Schultz, interim director of the doctoral program, said “It was an honor to witness these historic moments as the first recipients of a doctoral degree at Chicago State University,” adding, “We are proud to acknowledge Drs. Roberts-Watkins, Patterson, and Hollingsworth as distinguished alumni and look forward to building a strong doctoral culture. Their distinctions demonstrate a meaningful contribution to the field of education at the national level.”

CSU awarded its first doctorates of education to Angelia Roberts-Watkins, Reginald Patterson and Trina Hollingsworth. Dr. Roberts-Watkins’ dissertation topic focused on the alignment of middle school teachers with the nationwide principles of the National Middle School Association. Entitled Crossroads to the Middle School Movement: Are Teachers in Step with the National Middle School Association (NMSA) Principles, Roberts-Watkins’ dissertation utilizes a case-study approach that explored whether teachers and school administrators demonstrate appropriate belief systems and curricular structures that match middle grade philosophy with the ultimate goal of raising standards and establishing accountability in middle schools. Her research confirmed the belief that middle school philosophy has an influence on what is being taught and how it is taught in the middle school. The attributes identified in Dr. Roberts-Watkins dissertations associated with middle school philosophies were evident in the schools associated with the study.
Dr. Patterson’s dissertation topic examined the issue of youth sports. Entitled *The Impact of Sports Participation on Fifth Grade Students’ Behavior: A Case Study*, Patterson’s dissertation discusses the fundamental aspects of students’ involvement in sports and the relationship of sports participation and student behavior. This research supported the correlation that lessons learned from sports participation can change and improve the quality of life for an individual student and replace failure with success. It was concluded that sports participation contributes to student growth and personal development.

Dr. Hollingsworth’s dissertation — entitled *The Effectiveness of the Data Collaborative Model and Professional Learning Communities in Changing School Culture, Teachers’ Attitudes, Beliefs and Concerns* — explores the use of certain data collection methods at underperforming schools in urban school districts with high school teachers. Her findings indicated and support the belief that unofficial leaders working with grade level subcultures might be the key to facilitating implementation of improvement initiatives.

CSU has 70 students presently in the educational leadership doctoral program which was first accredited by the Illinois Board of Higher Education on June 8, 2004, and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools on April 27, 2005. The Type 75 Superintendent Endorsement was approved by the Illinois State Board of Education on February 2, 2007.

CSU’s doctoral program in educational leadership seeks to develop excellent educational leaders who are well grounded in research and theory and in the organizational, sociological, legal, economic, political, philosophical and historical foundations of education. The program emphasizes the preparation of urban practitioners in leadership and research.

“The educational leadership program’s ultimate goal is to graduate students prepared as knowledgeable and skilled practitioners fully equipped for success in a dynamic and changing world in the field of educational leadership,” added Dr. Carol Schultz.