



**CPED-FIPSE RESEARCH SITE VISIT  
RESPONSE REPORT FOR CSU-FRESNO  
PREPARED BY LORI MUELLER AND RAY BUSS**

**Introduction**

Over the course of two days in April 2012, Lori Mueller and Ray Buss met with a substantial number of faculty members, students, administrators, and staff members involved with the doctoral program at CSU—Fresno. These participants provided details about the history of the program, including its roots as a joint doctoral program with UC—Davis, its transition to a stand-alone program, the influence of CPED after the program’s inception in its current form, and the recent development of a new sister program at CSU—Bakersfield.

**Strengths**

Overall, the program is extraordinarily effective. Dr. Sharon Brown-Welty is an able leader who collaborates extremely well with faculty and staff members and students. All participants spoke highly of all aspects of the program. Embedded fieldwork, the signature pedagogy of the program, was mentioned repeatedly as an intentional component of the program that is valued by students and faculty members alike. Exceptional connections to the community and work with school districts and local agencies are central to the program. The program develops strong cohorts and conducts an annual assessment of students’ strengths and weaknesses. Various participants identified all six of the CPED working principles as being components of the program in one form or another. Participants spoke of strong collaboration at and among all levels, i.e., students, faculty members, staff members, and administration. Finally, communication, which is exemplified in the town hall meetings, is a strength of the program.

**Challenges**

With respect to challenges, several were noted in the interviews. Faculty members are still finding their places in the program when serving as chairs and in overall program roles. Meeting the needs of a diverse group of educators that includes PK-12 and higher educators also offers some challenges. The intensity of the program, including three-week summer classes, presents challenges to students. It will be interesting to determine

whether the model that has been so successful at CSU—Fresno can be implemented as seamlessly at CSU—Bakersfield. Specifically, learning about the influence location may have on implementation of the program will be critical because the unique needs of the Central Valley were mentioned frequently with respect to the CSU-Fresno program.

### **Conclusion & Recommendations**

Taken together, the evidence suggests the program is (a) extraordinarily effective, (b) highly innovative, (c) constantly changing to meet the needs of its students and community, and (d) exceptionally well run. We recommend that the CSU—Fresno program continue to participate in CPED and share lessons that have been learned by serving as a mentor to one or more of the new CPED institutions.