

*Bender
of
Twigs*



Jean Patterson

Three years after being tenured, Dr. Jean Patterson became the sole tenured faculty member to administer the Educational Leadership programs (master's, licensure, and Ed.D.). Throughout these years, she taught doctoral students, implementing and modifying the newly developed scholar practitioner program so that, when students graduated, they would have applied learning experiences in resolving problems in the workplace. During this time, she employed retired faculty from the Wichita School District to help in the master's and licensure courses. These were her only assistants in the programs for the next ten years. Miracle of miracles, she also found the needed time to conduct her own research, submit her documents, and she became a full professor in 2012.

For the Ed.D. degree, each year students enroll in core courses plus a year-long research project commissioned by local educational (both K-12 and higher education) and non-profit entities. These research ventures provide students with some of the best applied learning experiences in resolving real problems before embarking on their dissertations. The results of the projects also provide students with presentations at national conferences and articles published in refereed journals. Dr. Patterson has been the Chair and major professor of 60 student dissertations.

Dr. Patterson's own research has evolved out of these yearly projects, and she includes her students in her research studies. The research projects provide evidence for resolving many problems that schools and non-profits face each year. Thus, Jean's research addresses real-life solutions to help organizations function. And her students also benefit from the experience of working with research techniques to resolve issues they will likely face in their future professions. For example, last year's research involved a project at WSU. It addressed first-generation college students who were at risk of dropping out of college. The premise of the research stated: Students will persist and be successful if provided a validating environment. The results found WSU provides support and interventions to help these students succeed. Jean and her students will be presenting findings from the study at the Tilford Conference on Diversity and Multiculturalism, and they have submitted a proposal to present at the American Educational Research Association's annual conference. Dr. Patterson and her students have co-presented papers at this prodigious conference seven out of the past eight years. In recent years, she and her students have co-authored four peer-reviewed journal articles and two book chapters.

During her 25 years in Wichita, Jean Patterson has been active in service to the field of educational leadership at the local, district, and national levels, i.e., serving on various task forces for Wichita Public Schools, working with the citywide Hispanic Serving Institution Consortium, and undertaking the responsibility of scholarship judge for Executive Women International. At WSU, she has served as Graduate Coordinator of the Educational Leadership doctoral program for over 20 years. She also assumed the responsibility of Department Chair for six years. In addition, Jean has received several awards over the years. Included among these are: Phenomenal Woman Award (2013); President's Distinguished Service Award (2017); and the College of Education Teaching Award (2021).

For the last 25 years, Dr. Patterson has built an entourage of administrators in school districts and institutions of higher education throughout Kansas and the surrounding states. She worked diligently with these administrators when they were students in the educational leadership programs, and she continued to communicate and build valued relationships when they graduated and became professionals. At the end of each academic year, Dr. Patterson holds a celebration of the current graduates and invites students from past cohorts to attend the event. Many of the past students return year after year because of the dedication and support Jean Patterson has shown them. If you ask her, she can tell you where each past graduate is working currently and how that graduate fares. Her commitment to department programs and to education leadership in general are certainly two of the reasons her colleagues and the administration in her college value her contributions to education.