



Collaborative Researchers *for* Education Sciences Training

Collaborative Researchers for Education Sciences Training (CREST) Program, at the University of Washington

A Collaboration of the College of Education¹ and the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, with participation of the Departments of Economics and Sociology, and the School of Social Work.

In July 2009, the University of Washington launched a new doctoral training program, funded by a \$4.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). An inaugural cohort of 11 students began in fall 2009, and over five years, CREST will train 25 doctoral students, as part of an effort by IES to create a new generation of education scientists prepared to do rigorous, significant research on contemporary educational problems. As an interdisciplinary graduate program, 17 CREST-affiliated faculty represent Public Affairs, Sociology, Economics, Social Work, and three different departments in the College of Education.

The CREST program mission is to prepare scholars who are fully equipped for interdisciplinary research and evaluation of K-20 policy interventions and associated programs, using sophisticated mixed-methods designs built upon cutting edge quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

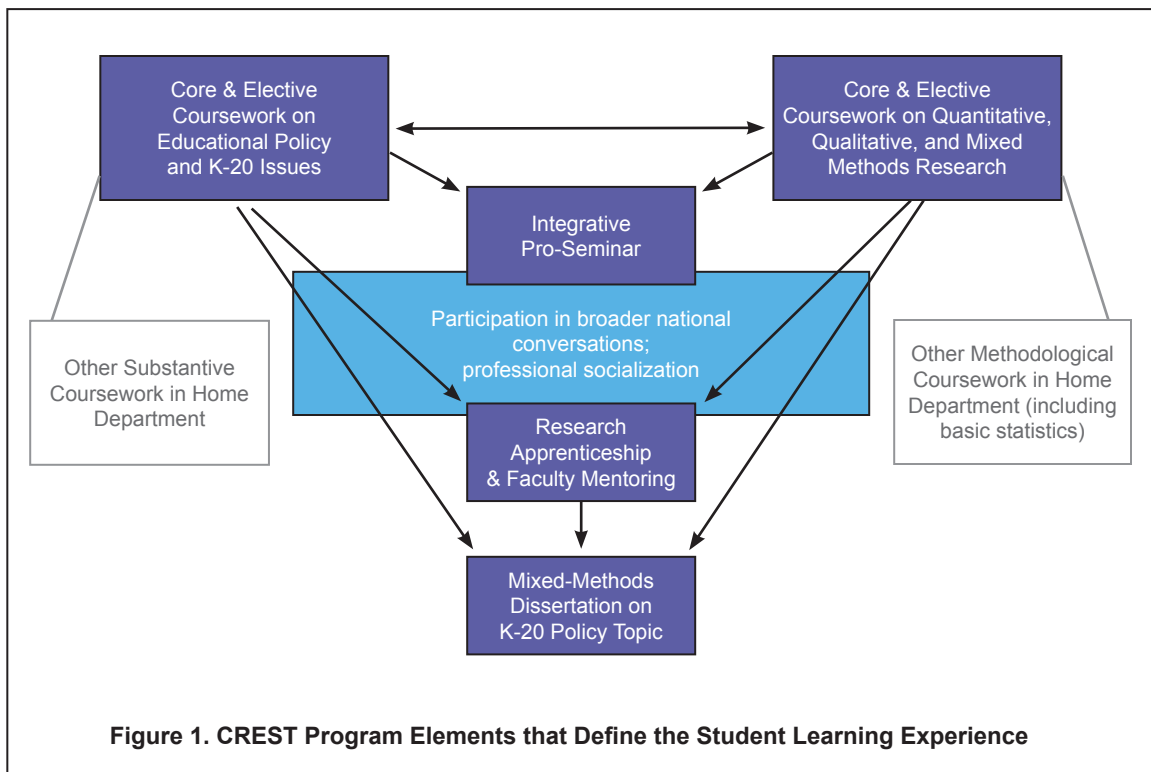
Substantive focus. CREST supports the study and evaluation of policies aimed at educational reform across the K-20 continuum, with special emphasis on those that affect struggling learners within *and across* levels of the system (e. g., especially in high school and postsecondary institutions and at the points of transition between them). The program rests on the premise that what happens in elementary and secondary schools is more intimately connected to what happens in postsecondary institutions, and vice versa, than past practice has presumed. This focus corresponds to several areas of emphasis in the IES research portfolio, especially high school reform, struggling adolescents, and the renewal of postsecondary education, as well as the role played by school, district, and state policies and finance systems, and also by leadership at multiple levels. CREST doctoral fellows explore how these matters work systemically to enhance student learning and other valued outcomes.

Methodological emphasis. Building on recent advances in this area of methodological theory and practice, the CREST program will help emerging scholars *discover what carefully conceived, feasible mixed-methods designs can add to the understanding of policy design, implementation, and effects in the K-20 realm that rigorous quantitative research alone will not accomplish.* Therefore, the program prepares researchers to meaningfully integrate well-executed quantitative research with rigorous qualitative methods that inform the K-20 educational enterprise.

1. Within the UW College of Education, CREST is administered by the Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy (CTP).

Six central elements define the student experience in the CREST Training Program (illustrated in the graphic below):

- *Core and elective coursework* in both educational policy across the K-20 continuum and quantitative and mixed methods.
- *Research apprenticeships and mentoring* that introduce students to the work of practicing scholars from the outset.
- *An integrative Pro-seminar* that stimulates ongoing conversation among CREST students and faculty about substantive educational policy issues and how they may be studied with rigorous mixed methods designs.
- *An advising system* that monitors and supports student progress.
- *An education-focused dissertation* guided by CREST faculty that will feature a mixed methods design in many, if not most, cases.
- *An introduction to regular participation in national scholarly conversations*, through conference participation, journal reviewing, and other activities.



Program Contacts

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