

Report from the Chair, T. B. Greenfield Dissertation Award Committee March 20, 2014

It was my pleasure to serve as Chair of the T. B. Greenfield Dissertation Award Committee for the 2013-2014 academic year. This report describes the process, and provides reflections on process for future consideration.

The Committee

The Committee was formed in January 2014 with CASEA's by-laws in mind: a minimum of three from among CASEA's membership, including representation based on geography and gender, and a francophone member were pursued. I would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation to the following Committee members:

1. Dr. Jerome Cranston, Assistant Professor and Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs), University of Manitoba
2. Dr. Renee Kuchapski, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Graduate & Undergraduate Studies in Education, Brock University
3. Dr. Ann Vibert, Professor and Director, School of Education, Acadia University

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, University of Maryland, College Park, who agreed to participate on the committee but due to unforeseen events could not complete the role.

Nominees and Adjudication Process

Six nominations were submitted as summarized in Table 1 (Appendix A). They were submitted electronically to the Chair. The nomination package included a letter of nomination, a 10-page summary of the dissertation written by the nominee, and an electronic copy of the dissertation.

All dissertations were assessed by three Committee members.

Committee members who represented the university of a nominee declared conflict of interest. In these cases, the Committee member did not assess or vote on the dissertation of her/his employing institution. At the time of adjudication I was employed with the University of Alberta and on leave from the University of Saskatchewan; therefore, I declared conflict of interest on dissertations from those universities. I read all dissertations, however, so that I could field questions or facilitate discussion as necessary.

Based on the report of last year's T. B. Greenfield Committee Chair, I considered the concern regarding selection criteria. To this end, the selection criteria were amended in an attempt to clarify adjudication. The selection criteria as noted on the CASEA website included:

1. Significance of the challenge/research problem;

2. Justification of research design, including where appropriate methodology, theoretical and/or conceptual framework, and methods;
3. Appropriate command of relevant strands of literature;
4. Potential contribution to educational administration scholarship and/or practice; and,
5. Excellence in presentation (e.g. clarity of writing, error-free).

A rubric was created in consultation with the President and members of the Committee (Appendix B).

The Recipient

Dr. Robin Mueller, who completed her dissertation in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. David Burgess, is the recipient of this year's T. B. Greenfield Dissertation Award. Dr. Mueller's research interrogated the taken-for-granted concept "values", exploring and distilling the notion of organizational values as a management term to gain insight into what constitutes "values", and how this construct can be understood regardless of the individuals who claim or subscribe to them. She developed a critical realist research method based on the retroductive mode of reasoning which emerges from the critical realist school of thought. This research stands out for the novelty of the question, the extensive and almost dogged approach to understanding the literature that contextualizes this philosophical inquiry, the crisp and clear exposition and justification of the methods and methodology, and the originality in the method of analysis created to understand the data. This research is outstanding for its philosophical depth, methodological rigor, and practical implications. Dr. Mueller's research holds potential to inform educational organizations at all levels because "values" are central to our strategic planning and visioning. Further, the phenomenon of creating, claiming, and codifying organizational values is at the center of any organization.

Those who nominated a dissertation were sent a letter of thanks. Nominees were copied on these letters. Dr. Mueller was invited to present her work at this year's meeting of CASEA/CCEAM in Fredericton, and to accept the award at the annual banquet. She will also receive a one-year complimentary CASEA membership. Dr. Mueller is beginning a tenure-track position at the University of Calgary May 1, 2014.

Reflections, Questions, and Suggestions

I asked Committee members to reflect on the adjudication process so that CASEA can continually improve. Questions/dilemmas we contemplated:

1. **Adjudication** is a subjective enterprise despite attempts to define parameters with a rubric. Although the rubric was designed to align with the selection criteria, no rubric can anticipate and therefore account for all elements because of the uniqueness of approaches to research/writing. The beauty of the Academy is the variation that emerges because our individual approaches, and

- yet, if we are to make claims about “outstanding” doctoral research, guidelines are required. My hope is that the rubric can be considered and further refined.
2. Does the Membership subscribe to the idea of changing the process to a **blind review**?
 3. I formed the committee prior to receiving nominations. It makes more sense to me to seek expressions of interest prior to the nomination date but to **invite committee participation after nominations** have been received so that conflict of interest can be avoided. This eliminates the need to seek out further committee membership to ensure equal number of adjudicators per dissertation.
 4. **Forming the committee was a challenge.** Given each of our scheduling demands, how can we encourage our colleagues to volunteer? Pay it forward system i.e. past award recipients, supervisors or past recipients? This aspect of the process was more time consuming than I anticipated. Further, the by-laws suggest committees must be formed from the membership, but those with expertise may be outside the membership.

Many thanks to Dr. Ken Brien, President, and the CASEA Executive, for their guidance and support throughout the process.

Sincerely,

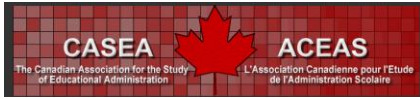
Bonnie L. Stelmach

APPENDIX A

Table 1: 2013-2014 Nominations to the T. B. Greenfield Dissertation Award Competition

Nominee	Supervisor	University	Title of Dissertation
Dr. Kate Cassidy	Dr. Michelle McGinn	Brock University	<i>The Essence of Feeling a Sense of Community: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry with the Middle School Students and Teachers</i>
Dr. Margot Heaton	Dr. Glenn Rideout	University of Windsor	<i>An Examination of the Relationship Between Professional Learning Community Variables and Teachers' Self-Efficacy</i>
Dr. Danielle Fullan Kolton	Dr. Dawn Wallin	University of Manitoba	<i>Understanding Social Justice in Education: Exploring the Concept with Principals through Dilemma Analysis</i>
Dr. John Scott Lowrey	Dr. Blair Mascall	UofT/OISE	<i>Outstanding Principals: A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Leadership Development, Principal Efficacy, and Transformational Leadership</i>
Dr. Donna Mayer	Dr. Rosemary Foster	University of Alberta	<i>A Case of Leadership Development</i>
Dr. Robin Mueller	Dr. David Burgess	University of Saskatchewan	<i>Models of Organizational Values in the Administration of University Student Services</i>

APPENDIX B



T. B. Greenfield Dissertation Award

Nominee:

CRITERIA	(5-6) EXCEPTIONAL	(3-4) EXCELLENT	(1-2) GOOD	(0-.5) BELOW AWARD STANDARD	SCORE
Significance of Challenge/Problem	Problem is original, clearly articulated, and shows depth of understanding of educational issues.	Problem shows new insight into previously identified issue.	Problem shows basic understanding of educational issues.	Unoriginal problem and/or vaguely articulated.	(X2) /12
Research Design—Description & Justification (methodology, method, theoretical framework)	Clear articulation and justification of choices related to methodology. Conceptual and/or theoretical framework (if present) are justified and applied. Rigorous data collection (if applicable).	Clear articulation of choices related to methodology, with some justification. Conceptual and/or theoretical framework (if applicable) are explained and applied. Extensive data collection (if applicable).	Research design is described. Conceptual and/or theoretical framework (if present) are described, but not applied throughout. Sufficient data collection.	Research design is described without justification. Conceptual and/or theoretical framework (if present) not applied. Minimal data collection.	(X2) /12
Literature Review	Demonstrates command of the literature—thorough and relevant. Literature is used to argue the value of, need for study.	Demonstrates broad understanding of literature—appropriate strands identified. Some attempt to use literature to argue the value of, need for study.	Demonstrates thoroughness and relevance. No attempt to use literature to argue value of, need for study.	Literature does not contextualize problem, and is not used to argue value of, need for study.	 /6
Contribution to Scholarship and/or Practice	Potential to influence scholarship and/or practice in unique and influential ways.	Potential to influence scholarship and/or practice in important ways.	Potential to influence scholarship and/or practice in relevant ways.	Little potential contribution to scholarship and practice.	 /6
Presentation	Error-free, sophisticated writing.	Minor errors, excellent writing.	Minor errors, clear writing.	Writing below expected standard.	 /6

Total Score = /42