



DOCTOR OF EDUCATION:  
**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP**

Anyone can manage people. Few can lead. *Choose to lead.*



[www.sjfc.edu](http://www.sjfc.edu)



## WELCOME

The Education Doctorate (Ed.D.) in Executive Leadership program—administered by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College—is designed for managers and executives in business, P-12 and higher education, health, and not for profit organizations. The program challenges traditional assumptions about doctoral education by providing a rigorous multidisciplinary program of study that incorporates innovative teaching, theory with practice, applied research, and personalized student services. You will discover the difference as candidates from diverse backgrounds and experiences are organized into teams in a professional, intellectually stimulating, and technologically rich environment. The program promotes creative discourse, understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives of leadership, and candidate success.

Program highlights include:

- A curriculum structured around working professionals.
- Classes meeting Friday evening and Saturday (every other weekend).
- Tuition includes laptop computer and books.
- Completion in 28 months, including coursework and dissertation.

We expect our graduates to make major contributions to their organizations and communities.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Transfer and Graduate Admissions at [grad@sjfc.edu](mailto:grad@sjfc.edu) or call (585) 385-8064.

## OVERVIEW

The accelerated program provides candidates with an opportunity to develop the critical leadership skills and knowledge that are required in today's increasingly complex, diverse, and information-driven organizations. This unique program was designed to provide an attractive and viable alternative to "traditional" doctoral programs:

- Provide executives and senior managers with an advanced curriculum that focuses on relevant and current topics and issues in executive leadership.
- Focus on the core leadership competencies, dispositions, and applied research that executives and senior managers need to be effective in various organization settings.
- Provide opportunities for candidates to focus their dissertation on actual problems in their organization, making the dissertation relevant and practical, and thereby encouraging organizational support.
- Provide candidates with access to a network of successful executives and organizations to support their intellectual, professional, and career development.

## PROGRAM LOCATIONS

**Main Campus:** St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY

**Extension Sites:** Iona College in New Rochelle, NY

Onondaga Community College's Regional Higher Education Center in Syracuse, NY

Ed.D. candidates at extension sites are required to take one course on the St. John Fisher College campus. This course is typically completed in one block session (i.e., Sunday - Thursday). Transportation and accommodations are provided.

**“The doctoral program at St. John Fisher College is embedded with research skills development throughout the curriculum and a call to transformative leadership. You have the support to work on content expertise aligned to dissertation milestones offering you a rich doctoral journey. The program’s in-depth experiences continue to assist me today.”**

Dr. Vicky (Vicma) Ramos  
District Superintendent,  
Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES  
Ed.D. Graduate

### Graduate Admissions

St. John Fisher College

3690 East Avenue

Rochester, NY 14618

(585) 385-8064

<http://go.sjfc.edu/graduate>

<http://go.sjfc.edu/edd>

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The Ed.D. in Executive Leadership operates within the context of the School of Education's Conceptual Framework, which embraces a philosophy of social justice based on five interlocking tenets: diversity, achievement, compassion, knowledge, and service. The program's faculty and staff are committed to modeling this philosophy in their interactions with candidates, colleagues, and the community.

## MISSION

The mission of the program is to provide a unique, challenging, and rigorous educational experience that prepares candidates for executive leadership roles within the context of a diverse, information-driven, and increasingly technological society. The program seeks to:

- Prepare ethically responsible leaders who are committed to improving conditions, opportunities, and outcomes for their clients and employees.
- Prepare highly capable leaders who understand and know how to use research, best practices, and new technologies to guide change and improve individual and organizational performance.
- Prepare confident and compassionate leaders who are committed to improving the quality of life for children and families in underserved communities.
- Prepare socially conscious and morally grounded leaders who respect and embrace diversity and understand the importance of human resource development.

## GOALS

- Provide a high quality educational program that prepares candidates for successful careers as executive leaders.
- Provide a program that promotes effective organizational and individual performance.
- Maintain a professional environment that promotes an understanding of and appreciation for diversity.
- Provide greater access for groups historically underrepresented in doctoral level programs, and in positions of executive leadership.
- Provide a rigorous multidisciplinary advanced program for working professionals.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Ability to apply and synthesize the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for effective leadership and management in various organizational settings.
- Capability to conduct research and collect, analyze, and interpret data to inform decision-making and improve performance.
- Facility to think and plan strategically and conduct action research that is supported by best practice.
- Understanding of the impact, interactions, and implications of various public sectors on organizations.
- Integrity to make ethical and fair decisions when facing moral dilemmas.
- Capacity to appreciate and maximize the talents and skills of a diverse workforce.



**“The Ed.D. program provided a progressive and in-depth experience through a dynamic and engaging curriculum, with opportunities for self-assessment and newly-honed leadership skills. Throughout this rigorous process, each and every leadership challenge helped me envision organizational change through the lens of diversity and social justice.”**

Dr. Carlos N. Medina  
Retired Chief Diversity  
Officer & Senior Associate  
Vice Chancellor for Diversity,  
Equity, and Inclusion  
State University of New York  
Ed.D. Graduate

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

## PROGRAM DESIGN

The program is based on an accelerated, cohort-paced model designed around a rigorous multidisciplinary program of study in executive leadership. Classes meet year-round in an alternate weekend format. Courses are offered sequentially, organized by topical themes, and aligned with New York State, national, and institutional leadership standards.

Candidates are organized into teams to develop and complete group projects. Readings are assigned prior to each class with the expectation that candidates will come prepared to discuss the related subject matter. The field experiences are aligned with coursework to support the integration of theory and practice.

The program includes professional development opportunities and seminars conducted by local, state, and national experts in the field of leadership. In addition, technology is used to support research, class presentations, course assignments, and other aspects of teaching and learning.

The program begins with a cohort of approximately 20 candidates. Candidates admitted to the program are required to register for six credits for the first semester and are required to register for nine credits for each of the next six consecutive semesters, including the summer sessions.

## PROGRAM OF STUDY

The program of study is based on widely accepted state and national standards, competencies, and dispositions that promote effective leadership. The courses, cohort model, field experiences, and dissertation processes integrate theory and practice to ensure that candidates receive a comprehensive, seamless, and high-quality educational experience based on cutting-edge knowledge, current research, and best practices.

The program emphasizes the reflective use of research as the basis for informing practice. Candidates are required to engage in independent research, field experiences, and group projects culminating in a dissertation that examines real organizational problems and recommends strategies for action based on best practices in their field of interest. Candidates are assigned faculty advisors and select executive mentors to help guide them in the dissertation process and field-based experiences.

All candidates are required to demonstrate competency in research by successfully completing courses in research-related methodologies. In addition, candidates are required to engage in four 50-hour field experiences in which they will work with a faculty advisor and executive mentor on research or other field-based projects, prepare for the demands of the dissertation, and develop a proposal that supports achievement of the organization's and the candidate's goals and program outcomes. The research and dissertation courses and field experiences are included within the 60-credit hour core requirement.

The program of study includes specific assessments and milestones in each module to measure and ensure progress toward degree completion. If the program requirements are met satisfactorily at each milestone, candidates can complete the program in approximately 28 months.

The **School District Leader (SDL) Advanced Certificate** is an additional program component for qualified individuals interested in school district leadership opportunities.



## CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

All candidates are required to:

- Complete the program's core curriculum, which includes 20 courses (60 credits).
- Register for nine credits each semester and be continuously enrolled, except the first summer, which requires candidates to register for six credits.
- Take the core courses offered in this curriculum; courses taken at other institutions may not be used as substitutes.
- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better each semester to continue in the program.

## CURRICULUM DESIGN

The curriculum is based on:

- Knowledge of theory and processes essential for effective organizational leadership.
- Development of essential research skills integral to successful organizational change and executive leadership.
- Theory related to practice.
- A rigorous multidisciplinary curriculum in leadership drawn from disciplines such as education, health, psychology, business, human services, public administration, philosophy, history, and law.

## INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

The curriculum is supported by a unique instructional approach that integrates theory with practice by using multidisciplinary research, case studies and field experiences, and teaming successful practitioners and experts with College faculty and field mentors.

Candidates are required to participate actively in class discussions, and are expected to contribute to, and in certain cases, lead the discussions based on their experiences and research. Each candidate works with a dissertation advisor and committee throughout the dissertation process. Certain aspects of the dissertation development process are integrated into the coursework and field experiences. However, candidates are expected to commit significant time outside of the classroom on dissertation development and refinement to support successful and timely completion of all dissertation requirements.



## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The comprehensive examination is an assessment of knowledge in the candidate's area of specialization. The comprehensive examination is a three-part written exam requiring candidates to demonstrate essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and reasoning based on the program's learning objectives.

Candidates are permitted two opportunities to pass the comprehensive examination. A candidate who is unsuccessful after two attempts will be withdrawn from the doctoral program.

To be eligible to take the comprehensive examination, candidates will be required to:

- Have a minimum of a 3.0 (B) or better grade point average with no incompletes.
- Have the recommendation of their advisor.
- Submit evidence satisfactory to the advisor of their ability to do research in the area of specialization.
- Be registered for the term in which the exam is taken.



**“The Ed.D. program provides immediate dividends applicable to your scholarship, research, organizational improvement planning, and executive leadership goals. I was able to develop systems, curricula, and organization objectives utilizing what I learned through the Ed.D. program and to interact with a cohort network of highly skilled professionals from various education, business, and nonprofit backgrounds.”**

Dr. Malcolm A. Punter  
President & CEO  
Harlem Congregations for  
Community Improvement, Inc.  
Ed.D. Graduate

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the Ed.D. in Executive Leadership, candidates are required to:

- Complete a minimum of 90 credit hours. Up to 30 hours from an approved graduate program may be considered for transfer.
- Complete the program's core requirements, comprised of a minimum of 60 credit hours, including research methodologies and dissertation.
- Pass a comprehensive exam, and write and defend a doctoral dissertation proposal and dissertation.
- Satisfy the residency requirement by completing at least nine credits of core courses each semester for two consecutive semesters.

## DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to submit the final dissertation, all candidates are required to:

- Satisfactorily complete all course requirements with a minimum of a 3.0 (B) or better cumulative grade point average.
- Fulfill the residency requirement.
- Pass the comprehensive examination.
- Receive approval from their dissertation chair.

To facilitate timely completion of the dissertation, each candidate will be assigned a dissertation chair and committee member by the beginning of the second semester. The dissertation committee, under the direction of the chair, oversees the progress, content, defense, methodology, and completion of each assigned candidate's dissertation proposal and dissertation.

The dissertation writing must be clear, scholarly, and follow generally accepted standards for the publication of scholarly papers. The dissertation may be a quantitative and/or qualitative study. The dissertation also should contribute to the body of knowledge and professional practice.

Candidates will demonstrate:

- A thorough grasp of the relevant research.
- The ability to gather, interpret, and analyze data.
- An understanding of how to interpret findings.
- The capacity to articulate policy implications and recommendations for action.

## ALUMNI

The following are just a few of the career paths taken by program alumni:

- **P-12 Education:** superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal
- **Higher Education:** president, provost, associate provost, senior vice president, associate professor, dean
- **Not for Profit:** president, director, CFO, deputy executive director, commissioner
- **Business:** director, senior manager, consultant
- **Health:** CEO, vice president, director, administrator

## STEPS FOR ADMISSIONS

Admission to the program is limited to qualified candidates who have:

- A minimum of three years of successful management/administrative level experiences.
- Completed a master's degree from a regionally accredited higher education institution.
- A proven record of excellence in mid-level leadership and management.

Candidates are required to provide evidence of their potential to meet the demands of a rigorous doctoral-level program. The admissions process involves three phases.

### PHASE 1

*Candidates for admission are required to submit:*

- A completed admissions application.
- Official college transcripts documenting completion of a master's degree.
- Two recommendations from successful leaders currently practicing in the candidate's or a related profession.
- A Supervisor's Performance Appraisal form documenting employment history and performance for the most recent two years.
- Three professional writing samples of no longer than five pages each, with the total not exceeding ten pages.
- A current résumé.
- A concise essay of no more than one typed page, outlining the candidate's vision of leadership and reasons for applying to the program.

### PHASE 2

*Applicants who meet the requirements of Phase 1 will be required to:*

- Participate in a formal interview process.
- Provide an on-demand writing sample on the day of the interview.

### PHASE 3

*The admissions process is completed as follows:*

- The Doctoral Program Admissions Committee reviews all required information and ranks final candidates for admission to the program.
- Candidates are selected for each cohort.
- The candidates are notified and offered admission to the program.
- If any candidate among the finalists declines the offer or fails to submit the admissions deposit by the established deadline, the next eligible candidate on the waiting list is offered admission.

## TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID

If you are applying for federal financial aid, you may do so online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Information is available at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov). Fisher's FAFSA code is 002821. Please apply for financial aid as soon as possible.

For more information about financing the doctoral program, contact the St. John Fisher College Office of Student Financial Services at (585) 385-8042 or [sfs@sjfc.edu](mailto:sfs@sjfc.edu).



**“The doctoral program in executive leadership has helped me to develop a better understanding of what it means to lead for good in the context of my professional and personal life. The personalized instruction, outstanding teaching staff, and interaction with other leaders in my cohort has deepened my commitment to excellence in leadership.”**

Kimberly Townsend  
President and CEO, Loretto  
Ed.D. Graduate



# COURSE LIST, MODULES, AND DISSERTATION MILESTONES

The sequence of courses and field experiences are organized under six interrelated thematic modules. Each module includes topics, activities, and assignments that reflect key concepts that impact leadership at the executive level, such as law, politics, planning, research, finance, governance, diversity, human relations and development, resource development and management, data driven and informed decision-making, policy, and ethics.

## FIRST SEMESTER

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Module I: Professional Seminars in Doctoral Studies and Executive Leadership

DEXL 701 – Doctoral Studies Seminar

DEXL 702 – Contemporary Issues in Executive Leadership

**Dissertation Milestone:** Identify Possible Dissertation Topic, Potential Problem Statement, and Research Sources

## SECOND SEMESTER

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Module II: Leading and Managing Complex and Diverse Organizations

DEXL 703 – Research Methods and Design

DEXL 704 – Leadership and Cultural Change

DEXL 705 – Field Experience I

**Dissertation Milestone:** Start Literature Review and Select Proposed Dissertation Topic

## THIRD SEMESTER

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Module III: Using Research, Best Practice, and Technology to Lead and Facilitate Change

DEXL 706 – Applied and Action Research

DEXL 707 – Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

DEXL 708 – Field Experience II

**Dissertation Milestone:** Complete Literature Review and Develop Problem Statement and Research Questions

## FOURTH SEMESTER

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Module IV: Implementing and Evaluating Effective Communications and Marketing Strategies

DEXL 709 – Public and Human Relations

DEXL 710 – Assessment, Evaluation, and Organizational Improvement

DEXL 711 – Field Experience III

**Dissertation Milestone:** Complete Research Design and Methodology

## FIFTH SEMESTER

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Module V: Linking Governance, Policy, Law and Ethics

DEXL 712 – Public Policy, Law and Ethics

DEXL 713 – Executive Leadership and Shared Governance

DEXL 714 – Field Experience IV

**Dissertation Milestone:** Complete and Defend Dissertation Proposal

## SIXTH SEMESTER

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Module VI: Connecting Finance and Human Resource Development and Management

DEXL 715 – Finance and Resource Development

DEXL 716 – Human Resource Development and Continuous Improvement

DEXL 717 – Guided Dissertation Seminar I

**Dissertation Milestone:** Collect and Analyze Data and Draft Findings

## SEVENTH SEMESTER

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Module VII: Promoting Diversity to Achieve Equity and Excellence

DEXL 718 – Leadership and Diversity

DEXL 719 – Guided Dissertation Seminar II

DEXL 720 – Guided Dissertation Seminar III

**Dissertation Milestone:** Finalize Conclusions and Recommendations, and Complete and Defend Dissertation

## OPTIONAL SEMESTER (IF NEEDED)

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Module VIII: Dissertation Completion

DEXL 721 – Guided Dissertation Seminar IV

DEXL 722 – Guided Dissertation Seminar V

Required for SDL Advanced Certificate:

DEXL 723 – District Level Internship (3 credits)

If additional time is needed at the end of the eighth semester, candidates can enroll in DEXL 725 - Dissertation Continuation (0 credits) for up to three consecutive semesters.