**Portfolios**

The Faculty Research Advisor will evaluate the graduate candidate’s Portfolio, the evidence based document substantiating the candidate’s completion of the stated goals in the Graduate Studies Program in the Helen DeVos College of Education. It is important for each candidate to understand this unit’s mission and demonstrate competences in the stated goals in the respective programs. Over the course of the candidate’s tenure, he or she will collect work samples to assure evaluators that the candidate has minimal competencies relative to the goals identified below. These artifacts (at least two for each goal in the selected program) demonstrate that he or she is "at standard" when measured against each of the goals in the selected program (Ed.S., M.Ed., or MAT). The *Faculty Research Advisor* will review and evaluate the final product and return the evaluation form to the Graduate Education Office at least fourteen days (14 days) prior to the candidate’s graduation date. The following *Frequently Asked Questions about the Portfolio* and the *Organizational Guide* should help the candidate organize and compile the appropriate evidence in the document and aid the *Faculty Research Advisor* in evaluating the final product.

**The SERVICE LEARNING OPTION**

The recent spate of professional literature (Cooper, 2007; Balwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Bollin, 2007; Hart & King, 2007; Smith, 2007; Lundy, 2007; DiMaria, 2006) extol the educational merits of *service-learning* from kindergarten classes to graduate seminars. These researchers offer both quantitative and qualitative evidence that most students are seeking more from their educational experience than the traditional answers that some institutions are delivering. Perhaps more importantly, these studies conclude that real and meaningful “learning” is the predictable result of “service” for most of the students who participate. Fundamental life skills and ways to actually integrate an education in productive ways seem to be important elements in this more personal form of education.

In a Christian institution, the mandate of service seems clear and is expressed in the collective desire to “be a good neighbor.” However the rationale and the payoff in a learning enterprise can be confusing. Especially for one founded on Biblical truths. These core issues may appear antithetical to some—the way to live is to die, leaders are servants, and the way to “get” is to give away exactly what one needs (Luke 6:38). Consequently, if candidates are here to “get” a Christian education, then it makes Biblical sense to give a Christian education away. This purposeful giving away of the very thing candidates come here for, makes good theological sense and as the literature attest, is educationally sound.

According to its stated institutional goal, Lee University is committed to preparing its students “for citizenship as Christians in the world through reflective community interactions and…commitment to ideals of service, benevolence, civic virtue and social justice “(*Lee University Catalog*, 2007-08, p. 4). This commitment is expressed most notably in the 80 hour service-learning obligation for each undergraduate. At the graduate level, the responsibility to serve and its subsequent educational benefits are no less valid. Consequently, it is recommended that a service-learning component be integrated into the graduate requirements in the Helen DeVos College of Education.

Toward that end, Graduate Candidates will be **ENCOURAGED** to**:**

* Offer 10 hours of service to the community. This “service” will be liberally defined to include a variety of options that range from conducting after school tutoring sessions to volunteering in community events. The only demands would be that the service would be
  + Without pay
  + Extra curricula
  + Be done in a diverse setting.
* “Learn to serve and serve to learn.” The essence of this very pragmatic experience is an opportunity to practice education in its most elemental form.
* Work with the *Faculty Research Advisor* who will approve and monitor the experience and evaluate the 2-5 page reflection paper required. This paper would be added to the candidate’s *Portfolio*.
* Partner with other graduate candidate’s to conduct Higher Education Learning Partners (HELP) Seminars, i.e., *Conversational English for ESL Populations; How to Improve Homework Scores*; *Workshops to Integrate Technology in the Classroom*, etc.