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Lamar University Professor Honored for Research on Quality Indicators of Online Education Programs

BLOOMINGTON, IND. — Dr. Kaye Shelton, an associate professor of educational leadership for doctoral studies at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, has received Recognition of Merit in the 2011–2012 PDK International Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award program. Her dissertation, “A Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Education Programs: A Delphi Study,” investigates quality indicators of distance-learning programs.

“This year, PDK received more than 40 exceptional entries for its dissertation award, and Dr. Shelton’s research stood out to the review panel,” said Dr. William Bushaw, PDK International’s executive director. “Research is central to PDK’s mission, and we are thrilled to honor Dr. Shelton’s work. She has made an important contribution toward advancing the field of education.”

Shelton’s dissertation investigated the continued relevance of the distance-learning quality standards put forth in 2000 by the Institute of Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and examined whether new indicators were necessary. As a result of her research, Shelton developed a scorecard that administrators are using to support and benchmark strategic planning and improvement. An interactive version of The Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs is available at the Sloan Consortium (http://sloanconsortium.org/quality_scoreboard_online_program).

“Higher education needed a method to identify quality within online education programs that could facilitate benchmarking and serve as a means toward improvement,” said Shelton. “This study provides just such a process and extends further validity to the original IHEP indicators. I hope the resultant scorecard not only becomes the industry standard, but more importantly becomes a vehicle through which campus conversations can begin about supporting quality online education.”

The PDK Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award is sponsored by the PDK Educational Foundation, which provides support for the projects of PDK International, a global association for educators. This award, which is designed to further research in education, is given to the PDK member whose dissertation best meets the criteria of sound scholarship and shows the most promise for improving education. In addition to the Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award, four members received Recognition of Merit for their dissertations. PDK received more than 40 submissions for the award, which was selected by a panel of education researchers.

An announcement of Shelton’s award will be published in the May 2012 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, the nation’s leading journal on education policy and practice.

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About PDK International

Founded in 1906, PDK International is a global association for professional educators. The organization's mission is to support education, particularly public education, as the cornerstone of democracy. More information is online at www.pdkintl.org.

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