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## NKU launches program for education doctorate

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**HIGHLAND HEIGHTS** - Northern Kentucky University has launched its new doctorate of education program with 11 students who hope to add Ed.D. after their name in three years.

The new program is unique in that the students will progress not as individuals, but as a group - known in the program as a cohort.

"It's a mutual-support kind of thing," said Dr. Mark Wasicsko, Bank of Kentucky endowed chair for the College of Education and Human Services, who organized the program.

"The research on Ph.D. programs says that only about 40 percent of the people who finish their course work get their doctorate completed," said Wasicsko. "It's called ABD - all but dissertation. In cohort groups the numbers for completion are well over 80 percent. It's a mutual-support team working together on projects, a team of people who work to help each other succeed."

The doctorate program is designed for students who have a minimum of five years' experience as an educational leader or practitioner.

Student Gail Rizzo is the director of outreach and a licensed counselor at Mt. Carmel Christian Church. She is also an adjunct professor in NKU's theater department.

"I loved the fact it was local and I was intrigued by the structure," said Rizzo. "The portion that sold me on it was the cognate course requirement because that would allow me to pursue my school counseling credentials while working on the Ed.D."

Another unique element of the program will be an action-research dissertation.

"An action-research dissertation is where the learning associates (students) pick an issue where they work that's important to their organization. They will develop a plan and test and see if they can improve their own agency through their own actions."

Wasicsko said the program is an outgrowth from the Vision 2015 plan.

NKU "President (James) Votruba argued in order to implement Vision 2015 that we had to have the tools," said Wasicsko. "One of the tools was the ability to offer the highest academic programs at NKU. He was saying, 'If Northern is going to be a good steward of the region, then we have to offer every degree that's possible to improve the education area.'"

An Ed.D. open house will be held on Oct. 4 from 10:30 a.m. until noon in the Otto M. Budig Theater in the University Center.