

# What Former ALS Students Are Saying

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I never thought of myself as a doctoral student and then before I knew it I found myself thrust into this doctoral program! Could I ever be bright enough to meet these expectations?? Looking back on it, the experience was wonderful. Living it, I wasn't so sure. One of the funniest moments that I can recall is when Dr. Millward asked if anyone knew what a "State Dinner" was. I, the very bright doctoral student that I was, quickly raised my hand. Unfortunately I thought he said "steak dinner" and so I proceeded to talk about getting out the grill and grilling the steaks, etc. Well the entire class, including Dr. Millward, just roared! I quickly learned that I wasn't the brightest, but with much dedication and perseverance I graduated and still look at my Doctor of Education diploma hanging on my office wall with awe!

***Terri Astorino - 2005***  
***Edinboro University***

Through the ALS Program, I was able to meet and talk with people like Thomas Sergiovanni - a strong advocate and authority on moral leadership - and Charlotte Danielson, who is famous for her work with effective instructional strategies. The program's instructors are accessible and professional. Their varied experiences in many areas of higher education and public education make the ALS Program unique. The professors in the Program truly changed my life. The ALS Program gave me an opportunity to grow, not just as an educator, but as a person.

***Alfonso "Butch" Angelucci - 2008***

Applying to the ALS program proved to be one of the most important decisions in my life. I have benefitted on both a personal and professional level. Personally, I have made a lifelong network of friends who share the same regard for education. Professionally, I continue to benefit from my studies, not only in career advancement but also in making professional contributions back to the field of education. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not speak to the quality of education I received at IUP. They have assembled a world class faculty who mold students into both the current and future leaders of education.

***Jay Burkhart -1996***

My own personal journey through the ALS program at IUP was rigorous, enlightening, challenging and worth it! The instructors and support staff provided the close personal connection that was essential for helping me to grow both personally and professionally. I truly believe that the course work was strategically designed to encourage me to question my own thinking and understanding of what it really means to be an effective leader. I found myself consistently grappling with new understandings of leadership through reading, writing, peer discussions, data analysis, and quantitative research design. When I reflect upon the impact of the overall ALS program, I quickly become cognizant of how very little I knew before I began the program, surprised by how much I have learned, and humbled by how much there still is to learn. Working together with all of my colleagues in Cohort VI has enriched my skill sets as a school administrator in so many ways. Choosing to participate was one of the best decisions I've made in my life!

***Luke Lansberry - 2004***

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The learning opportunities extended to me as a member of Cohort IV in the ALS program were diverse, engaging, and provoked insightful, intellectual debate. The Cohort model proved to be a motivator for members of our group to meet the expectation at the outset, get the degree...finish the dissertation. As each defended his/her dissertation leading to the award of the doctoral degree, the Cohort congratulated those who attained the degree and encouraged members still on the journey. The professionalism of the instructional leaders of the program and the depth of knowledge shared, has prepared me and my fellow classmates to step out into new and challenging leadership roles. Dr. Kathy Kaufman once said, "Once you get this degree, doors will open." And so it is, how right she was!

***Luanne Kokolis – 2000***

I remember my first trip to IUP. I couldn't shake the feeling of fear and nausea. That first night, Terri Astorino and I wandered aimlessly around Wal-Mart wondering what we got ourselves into. I think we were in the store for 25 minutes and never looked at a thing.

The ALS program provided me with a doctoral degree that secured a position in higher education. I currently teach in the baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs at Edinboro University of Pa. Nursing education has afforded me the opportunity to make a significant difference in the lives and practice of many nursing students and graduates. In addition, the networking opportunities have been beneficial for me personally as well as the graduates from our program. The IUP ALS program also introduced me to colleagues that continue to support me in my life as a practitioner and educator.

I am very grateful for the IUP ALS experience. The faculty as well as the actual program provided me with a diverse and solid knowledge base that allowed me to expand upon my personal area of study.

I would like to extend a special thanks to my dissertation committee, Drs. Jalongo, Reig, and Fennimore. My dissertation committee gave me wonderful advice and direction pertaining to scholarly writing that continues to be a benefit me in my life as an educator. I'm very fortunate to have worked with such talented, hard working, and most of all, patient individuals. Your hard work and efforts will NEVER go unnoticed.

To current and future IUP ALS students: Congratulations on your choice to pursue doctoral education at IUP. My hope is that this experience will be equally as rewarding for you as it has been for me. Take advantage of what this program has to offer. This experience will prove to be rewarding for the remainder of your professional career. Good luck in your studies and I hope that our professional paths will cross in the near future.

***Tom White – 2005***

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As a 2006 alumnus of the ALS program (Cohort 5), I can most definitely testify to the difference the program has made in my life. When my colleagues ask me to recommend a doctoral program to them, I never hesitate in recommending ALS. The program has a number of strengths, including (but not limited to) the following: the cohort structure; the timing and availability of course offerings; a weekend class schedule that is so adaptable to a full-time working adult student's needs; the quality and variety of learning experiences provided; and faculty members who not only are "experts" in their disciplines, but who are extremely flexible with class schedules and assignments, and who work with and support individual students, helping them to accomplish their goals, and to (most important of all) finish their dissertations.

I still remember the first day of my statistics class with Dr. Yan (who later became my dissertation committee chair but has since left IUP). When he asked us, "What is a good dissertation?" we were at a loss to respond. With a big smile, he said, "A good dissertation is a DONE dissertation." And of course, he was right. Not only did I finish my dissertation with the help and encouragement of Dr. Yan and the other members of my committee, I gained so much from the total experience of the ALS program: new friendships, new skills (e.g., writing, presenting, collaborating) new knowledge, and new ideas. And, a new job: although I am still working at the same institution (celebrating 25 years this year), after I completed my formal classes and internship but had not yet written my dissertation, I applied for and was promoted to a higher position. And, I now have two articles published. I am very happy that I decided to take this career step and very grateful for the ALS program and for all who have contributed to make it what it is today. It's a lot of work, but it's worth it!

***Patricia B. Serotkin, D.Ed. - 2005***  
***Vice President for Strategic Initiatives***  
***Saint Francis University***

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