

**Comprehensive Program Review Self-Study
M.Ed. Early Childhood Education**

**Columbus State University
September 2005**

Executive Summary for the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education Program

Major Findings of the Program's Quality and Productivity

Program Quality: Very Strong

In February 2005, a continuing approval review of the College of Education was conducted by a Board of Examiners (BOE) consisting of representatives from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The 2000 NCATE Standards and the Georgia 2000 Standards were used to assess the unit and its programs. The BOE judged all standards to be met for the unit and for all initial and advanced programs. Overall, the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program is strong and prepares highly qualified teachers who are able to use their enhanced knowledge and expertise in their schools, districts, and state.

Program Productivity: Satisfactory

Enrollment in the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program has remained fairly consistent with a slight decline in 2004 and ranks third in average enrollment (24.25 students per year) among the ten M.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education. Courses are offered on a one- or two-year cycle, and enrollment in required courses is good. This helps to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department. Diversity in the program increased in 2004 with 36.4% of the majors coming from minority groups. Graduates of the program are in high demand.

The number of M.Ed. Early Childhood Education degrees conferred by CSU (on average 10.75 per year) has been fairly consistent over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. As the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers a master's degree in Early Childhood Education, CSU provides teachers in its service region an opportunity that they might not have otherwise, to gain expertise in Early Childhood Education.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Quality

Though the program quality is very strong, we continue to look for ways to make improvements. Current initiatives include:

- Aligning coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Early Childhood (2005-2006). Work will be supported by a PRISM mini-grant.
- Considering ways to connect the content of the graduate early childhood coursework to the P-5 curriculum (ongoing).
- Completing the development of a Model Early Childhood Classroom in Jordan Hall to be used to model innovative teaching and materials (ongoing).

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee (PAC) will oversee the following efforts to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers.

- Align coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Early Childhood (2005-2006). Work will be supported by a PRISM mini-grant.

- Explore ways to provide additional support for students in graduate early childhood courses (ongoing).
- Consider ways to connect the content of the graduate early childhood coursework to the P-5 curriculum (ongoing).
- Work to recruit teachers into the graduate program. Efforts are underway to consider additional ways to recruit students for the graduate programs. Additionally, faculty will be meeting with the graduating seniors and working with teachers in our Partner Schools to recruit for the graduate programs.

Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program at CSU is a viable one. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/PSC Board of Examiners in February 2005, the quality of the program is very strong. All NCATE/PSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced programs. In addition, program quality is enhanced by special opportunities available at CSU. Early Childhood Education majors have access to resources and professional development opportunities offered through the Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative (CRMC), Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCRRA), Center for Quality Teaching & Learning (CQTL), and Project STEADY (Sustained Teacher Education Advisement for the Defining Years).

The viability of the program is also ensured by the collaborative relationship that exists between the College of Education, Early Childhood Education program, and P-12 teachers. Representatives from each of these groups work together to make improvements to the early childhood education programs at CSU and to impact early childhood education in our region. The M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education is a valuable resource for teachers in our region who want to grow professionally and gain expertise in the field of early childhood education. Students in the M.Ed. program take what they learn and apply it in their own classrooms to help their students learn.

Graduates of the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program are also a valuable resource for our undergraduate program in early childhood. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our graduate programs in early childhood have helped to create a cadre of leaders within our Partner School Network. Graduates often serve CSU as pre-student teaching cooperating teachers and cooperating teachers for student teaching. They are an invaluable asset in assisting with the development of our undergraduates.

Though small, the number of M.Ed. Early Childhood degrees conferred by CSU has been fairly consistent over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. As the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers a master's degree in Early Childhood Education, CSU provides early childhood teachers in its service region an opportunity to gain expertise in early childhood education. This is an opportunity that they might not have if CSU did not offer this degree program. With the need to provide highly-qualified teachers, we need to provide every possible opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and enhance their knowledge and skills in early childhood education.

Program Improvement Plan

In response to the findings of the Comprehensive Program Review, the faculty members and administrators of the M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education propose the strategies outlined below to improve the quality, productivity and viability of the program. These strategies will be facilitated by the Early Childhood Program Advisory Committee (PAC).

<i>Departmental Plans and Priorities</i>	<i>CPR Indicator</i>	<i>Projected Timeline</i>
1. Refine the College of Education Recruitment Plan to focus on specific methods for recruiting Early Childhood graduate students from diverse backgrounds	Productivity Viability	2006-2007
2. Explore various funding sources to provide scholarships for students seeking advanced degrees in Early Childhood Education	Productivity Viability	2006-Ongoing
3. Align appropriate graduate courses with the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to make the individual courses as well as the program highly attractive to prospective graduate students who will be implementing the GPS.	Quality Productivity Viability	2006-2007
4. Continue to connect the content of the graduate early childhood courses to the P-5 curriculum	Quality Productivity Viability	2006-Ongoing

The Interim Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs have reviewed the plan and will commit financial and personnel resources to accomplish priorities 1, 3, and 4 for program improvement. Resources from external funding will be necessary to support priority 2. The Program Coordinator will communicate additional resource requests as needed to the appropriate administrator within the College of Education at Columbus State University.

Summary Recommendation and Supporting Rationale

Recommendation: *Maintain the Program at the Current Level*

The program quality is very strong, but the number of degrees conferred each year is small. There are factors beyond our control that have an impact on the M.Ed. program. Since teachers can get a master’s degree in any field and receive an increase in pay, some of the early childhood teachers in our service region have chosen to pursue a master’s degree in an area other than early childhood.

As previously mentioned, CSU will continue to work to improve the current M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Georgia Performance Standards), improving the curriculum, providing better support and resources for students, and intensifying recruitment efforts. By enhancing the quality of the program, we hope to attract more potential students.

I. Program Overview

The M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education provides advanced professional and pedagogical studies that enhance the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of classroom teachers. In early childhood education courses, professional courses, and field experiences, candidates have multiple opportunities to demonstrate excellence in teaching, scholarship, and professionalism. The Early Childhood Education program is consistent with the mission of the College of Education (COE) to achieve excellence by guiding individuals as they develop proficiency, expertise, and leadership to strengthen individuals, families, education programs, communities, and community agencies. The COE Conceptual Framework provides the overall foundation and direction for the COE and is reflected in the broad goals of the early childhood education program. These goals are summarized below.

Upon completion of the program of study, students completing the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education will be able to:

1. Identify elements of developmentally appropriate practice (scholarship);
2. Describe the rationale for the use of developmentally appropriate practice (scholarship);
3. Plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate activities within the early childhood classroom (teaching);
4. Identify significant developments in a human organism from conception throughout the period of early childhood (scholarship);
5. Identify significant events in history of early childhood education and discuss their relationship to the current state of early childhood education (scholarship);
6. Explain how influential educational psychologists (i.e. Piaget, Erickson, Skinner, Maslow) have impacted the field of early childhood education and classroom instruction (scholarship);
7. Use current research in early childhood education to refine classroom practices (teaching);
8. Identify current trends and issues in contemporary curriculum theory (scholarship);
9. Use a variety of teaching strategies to enhance learning opportunities for children in the following curriculum areas: language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, and movement education (teaching);
10. Assess, create, and employ a variety of authentic assessment strategies within the early childhood classroom (teaching);
11. Serve as advocates for young children and professionalism in the field of Early Childhood Education (professionalism).

The goals of the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education reflect the belief that candidates should display *proficiency* before they enter advanced study and should develop and demonstrate *expertise* (M.Ed.) and *leadership* (Ed.S.) as they complete their programs.

The M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education helps CSU to accomplish its mission of serving the educational needs of a diverse region. By preparing highly-qualified teachers, the program helps to improve the quality of education and the quality of life in the institution's service area.

II. Summary Findings of the Program's Overall Quality

In February 2005, a continuing approval review of the College of Education was conducted by a Board of Examiners (BOE) consisting of representatives from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The 2000 NCATE Standards were used to assess the unit and its programs. The BOE judged all standards to be met for the unit and for all initial and advanced programs. Following is a summary of the findings taken from the BOE final report.

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Assessment data from Praxis I, Praxis II, GPA's, MAP evaluations, exit examinations, and national licensing exams indicate that teacher candidates know their subject matter and candidates for other school roles know their fields, both of which are aligned with professional, state, and institutional standards. MAP evaluations and the Disposition Evaluation Form give evidence that candidates and other school personnel know how to teach their subject matter and can deliver information in a clear and meaningful way so that all students learn.

Areas for Improvement: Candidates in Art Education, Biology, Chemistry, and French do not demonstrate content mastery.

Rationale: While overall more than 80 percent of the candidates in the unit have passed their respective content licensure exams, fewer than 80 percent of candidates in Art Education, Biology, Chemistry, and French passed their respective content licensure exams. Note: Chemistry and French had only one program completer each over the past three years.

Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit maintains a comprehensive assessment system for the initial and advanced levels to ensure the systematic collection of data, providing opportunities for the unit to analyze, evaluate, and improve the quality of programs, unit operations, and candidate performance. The assessment systems reflect the conceptual framework and are aligned with INTASC and NBPTS standards as well as specialty professional associations. The unit utilizes information technologies to effectively collect and aggregate data for candidate, program, and unit improvement.

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

All of the unit's programs which prepare candidates to become teachers or fill other roles as members of the education profession include field work/clinical practice as an integral part. Use of the MAP Evaluation Instrument and the Dispositions Evaluations which connects with the Conceptual Framework supports the work of the unit and provides scaffolding so that candidates acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by those who are in professional education roles. Candidates are also surrounded by experienced, caring, competent professionals representing both the University and P-12 partners. Innovations such as the use of information technology for scheduling and tracking candidate progress in a very flexible and comprehensive database, the STEADY new teacher mentoring program, and the refinement of the Partner School Network enhance to quality of the program and its graduates.

Standard 4: Diversity

The unit has clearly defined its candidate dispositions related to diversity, and these dispositions are assessed throughout required coursework in the initial and advanced programs. Three of the 32 unit faculty represent diversity. The diversity of candidates in unit programs roughly mirrors that of the university and service area as a whole. Because of the racial and ethnic diversity in the university's service area, initial and advanced candidates also work with a broadly diverse population of P-12 students.

Areas for Improvement: The college has not been successful in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty.

Rationale: Even though efforts have been made to recruit additional minority faculty, currently there are three minority faculty in the unit. While this constitutes a slight improvement from 1998, a significant impact has not been made to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to work with diverse faculty.

Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development

Unit faculty have extensive academic backgrounds. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the full-time faculty, and seventeen percent (17%) of the part-time faculty hold terminal degrees while the remaining faculty either are working to complete doctoral studies or have master's degrees. Unit faculty are effective teachers who model best teaching practices in their areas of specialty. Most faculty have been engaged in scholarly activities and service activities to the local, state, regional, national, and international communities. All full-time tenured and non-tenured faculty are systematically and annually evaluated by their department chair, personnel committee, unit dean, and throughout the university input system. The faculty serve on committees and boards at the university and in the local community. They are also involved in local, state, and national professional associations. The unit has an expectation of professional growth/development of both full-time and part-time faculty, and faculty concur with the expectation by attending workshops and conferences, reading journals, and conducting research.

Areas for Improvement: Part-time faculty are not systematically evaluated.

Rationale: There is no systematic process for evaluating part-time faculty across the unit.

Standard 6: Unit Governance and Resources

The unit has the responsibility for authority for the delivery of the preparation of all professional educators. Systems and processes are in place to ensure that all constituencies are represented in the design, delivery and assessment of unit programs. Facilities, personnel and budget are adequate to meet the needs of candidates, faculty and programs. The unit does not require part-time faculty who teach or supervise student teachers to attend an orientation/training session on the conceptual framework or the use of the disposition or MAP rubrics.

Areas for Improvement: Not all part-time faculty are adequately trained on assessments used to evaluate candidates.

Rationale: The unit cannot ensure that part-time faculty have the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively assess candidates.

III. Summary Findings of the Program’s Overall Productivity

Enrollment in the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program has remained fairly consistent with a slight decline in 2004 and ranks third in average enrollment among the ten M.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education. Courses are offered on a one- or two-year cycle, and enrollment in required courses is good. This helps to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department. Diversity in the program increased in 2004 with 36.4% of the majors coming from minority groups. Graduates of the program are in high demand.

The number of M.Ed. Early Childhood Education degrees conferred by CSU has been fairly consistent over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. As the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education, CSU provides teachers in its service region an opportunity that they might not have otherwise, to gain expertise in Early Childhood Education.

III A. Enrollment of Students in the Program

The enrollment pattern for the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood is shown in Table 3.1.

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Full-Time	7	4	4	11
Part-Time	19	21	20	11
<i>Total</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>22</i>

Table 3.1 Number of Declared Majors in M.Ed. Early Childhood Education– Fall Semester

Until 2004-2005 when the numbers were equal, the majority of students in the M.Ed. program were part-time students who teach during the day and take evening classes. Enrollment has remained fairly consistent with a slight decline in 2004-2005.

Table 3.2 shows the total enrollment in all M.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education at CSU. Enrollment in the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program continues to be comparable to the enrollment in most other education programs.

Program	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Average
Middle Grades Education	29	50	53	58	47.5
Special Education – Learning Disabilities	22	33	28	31	28.5
Early Childhood Education	26	25	24	22	24.25
Secondary English	9	24	33	27	23.25
Secondary Science	13	22	20	17	18
Secondary Mathematics	12	13	21	20	16.5
Special Education – Behavioral Disorders	15	15	18	16	16
Secondary Social Science	7	19	22	15	15.75

Health & Physical Education	10	13	11	11	11.25
Special Education – Mental Retardation	10	17	8	8	10.75

Table 3.2 Number of Declared Majors in M.Ed. Programs – Fall Semester

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee (PAC) oversees the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood and works to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers. Currently, we are aligning coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Early Childhood in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards. By responding to current initiatives and mandates, we hope to recruit more teachers into the M.Ed. program.

III B. Annual Degree Productivity of the Program

As indicated in Table 3.3, the number of M.Ed. degrees conferred each year in Early Childhood Education has remained fairly consistent. The number of degrees conferred in Early Childhood has remained among the top degree-producing majors in Teacher Education. Efforts are underway to examine the graduate programs to determine how best to meet the needs of graduate candidates and increase enrollment in the graduate program.

Program	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Early Childhood Education	<i>12</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>
Health & Physical Education	1	3	6	6
Middle Grades Education	10	10	10	26
Secondary English	7	3	6	16
Secondary Mathematics	5	1	4	3
Secondary Science	1	4	6	10
Secondary Social Science	1	4	5	2
Special Education – Behavioral Disorders	7	5	8	3
Special Education – Learning Disabilities	10	8	13	7
Special Education – Mental Retardation	3	3	1	3

Table 3.3 Number of Degrees Conferred – Fiscal Year

III C. Program Completion Efficiency & Graduation Rate

Table 3.4 shows the graduation rates for all M.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education at CSU.

Program	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Early Childhood Education	46%	36%	46%	50%
Health & Physical Education	10%	23%	55%	55%
Middle Grades Education	34%	20%	19%	45%
Secondary English	78%	13%	18%	59%
Secondary Mathematics	42%	8%	19%	15%
Secondary Science	8%	18%	30%	59%
Secondary Social Science	14%	21%	23%	13%
Special Education – Behavioral Disorders	47%	33%	44%	19%
Special Education – Learning Disabilities	45%	24%	46%	23%
Special Education – Mental Retardation	30%	18%	13%	38%

Table 3.4 Graduation Rate

Graduation rates tend to fluctuate as students complete their programs of study at different rates. The graduation rates for the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program tend to be consistent with the rates for most other M.Ed. programs. There has been an increase over the last two years in the graduation rate. This may be due in part to the addition of several new full-time faculty who have assisted with graduate advisement.

Providing a quality program in Early Childhood Education is the primary concern of Early Childhood Education faculty. We will continue to make every effort to provide meaningful and relevant coursework that prepares teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all students learn. Ongoing efforts to offer additional support and resources to teachers as they work on their M.Ed. degree should ensure that most students who enroll in the program are able to complete it.

III D. Efficiency & Clarity of the Program’s Course Requirements

The M.Ed. Program in Early Childhood Education requires a professional core (7 credits), an Early Childhood Education concentration core (26 credits), and recommended electives (3 credits). Course requirements for the M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education include the following:

Area 1: Professional Core (7 hrs.)

EDUF 6115 Educational Psychology: Achievement for Diverse Learners (3)

EDUF 6116 Research Methods and Action Research (3)

EDEC 6155 Early Childhood in Contemporary Society (4)

EDEC 6156 Neurological, Psychological & Physiological Development (4)

EDEC 6166 Assessment Methods, Instruments, and Procedures (3)

EDEC 6115 Literacy Education Across the Language Arts (3)

EDEC 6116 Writing and the Young Child (3)

EDUF 6795 Seminar in Collaboration in School and Student Academic Improvement (1)

Area 2: Concentration (26 hrs.)

EDEC 6155 Early Childhood in Contemporary Society (4)

EDEC 6156 Neurological, Psychological & Physiological Development (4)

EDEC 6166 Assessment Methods, Instruments, and Procedures (3)

EDEC 6115 Literacy Education Across the Language Arts (3)

EDEC 6116 Writing and the Young Child (3)

EDRG 6118 Methods and Materials for Teaching Reading in Early Childhood (3)

Select two of the following four courses.

EDEC 6125 Methods and Materials for Teaching Mathematics in Early Childhood (3)

EDEC 6135 Methods and Materials for Teaching Science in Early Childhood (3)

EDEC 6145 Methods and Materials for Teaching Social Studies in Early Childhood (3)

EDRG 6148 Psychology of Reading/Summer Institute (3)

Area 3: Electives (3 hrs.)

EDEC 6795 Seminar in Early Childhood (2)

EDRG 6245 Assessment and Classroom Instruction/Summer Institute (3)

EDRG 6756 Classroom Literacy Seminar (1)

EDUF 6000 Required Exit Examination (0)

These requirements are communicated online and through the CSU Catalog. At the beginning of each semester, a Graduate Orientation is held for all new graduate students. At this orientation, program requirements are clearly communicated, and the program coordinator and Early Childhood Education faculty work with each student to develop a tentative program of study. Each candidate is assigned a graduate advisor from one of the Early Childhood Faculty members. Subsequently, the advisors communicate with graduate students each semester by e-mail, phone, or face-to-face meetings to update degree progress sheets and advise on course selection.

III E. Frequency and Sequencing of Course Offerings Required for Program Completion

As shown in Table 3.5, courses required in the M.Ed. Early Childhood program are offered on a regular basis. Candidates can complete their programs of study in four semesters, if they so choose.

Number of Sections Per Semester													
	F 01	Sp 02	Su 02	F 02	Sp 03	Su 03	F 03	Sp 04	Su 04	F 04	Sp 05	Su 05	F 05
EDUF 6115	5	1	3	3	4	2	4	3	3	2	2	2	2
EDUF 6116	1	5	5	6	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	2
EDUF 6795										1	1	1	1
EDEC 6155			1		1	1		1	2		1		
EDEC 6156		1				1			1			1	
EDEC 6166	1	1		1			1		2	1		1	1
EDEC 6115			1			1			1			1	
EDEC 6116		1			1			1		1	1		
EDRG 6118	1			1		1	1			1			1
EDEC 6125	1			1			1			1			1
EDEC 6135	1			1			1	1		1			1
EDEC 6145			1			1			1			1	
EDRG 6148			1			1			1	1		1	1
Elective EDEC/EDRG courses	1	3	2	1	4	1	1	3	1		3	1	

Table 3.5 Frequency of Course Offerings

III F. Enrollment in the Program's Required Courses

Table 3.6 shows the average enrollment per section for required courses in the M.Ed. Early Childhood program. All M.Ed. students must take EDUF 6115, EDUF 6116, and EDUF 6795, so average enrollments in these courses are higher. Enrollments in EDEC 6115, 6116, 6155, 6156, and EDRG 6118 are the best indicators of enrollment trends in the early childhood program. Enrollment in these courses has remained fairly consistent during the period from 2001 to 2005, with an average enrollment of 9.2.

Average Enrollment Per Section													
	F 01	Sp 02	Su 02	F 02	Sp 03	Su 03	F 03	Sp 04	Su 04	F 04	Sp 05	Su 05	F 05
EDUF 6115	8.4	26	13	13	13.5	15.5	11.5	10	15.3	22.5	18.5	14	19.5
EDUF 6116	25	8.8	12.2	7	13	16	13.5	19	18	25.5	14.7	17	21
EDUF 6795										35	12	16	65
EDEC 6115		11	7			8			10			10	
EDEC 6116					18			11			13		
EDEC 6155			7		1	13		8	1		9		
EDEC 6156		6				14			14			7	
EDEC 6166	6	1		17			10		2	10		6	
EDRG 6118	8			16		12	10			14			6

Table 3.6 Average Enrollment in the Program's Required Courses

By offering the required EDEC, and EDRG courses once or twice a year, enrollment is high enough that the courses do not have to be cancelled. A projected course offerings matrix was

developed to help candidates know which courses will be offered each term. This has assisted candidates and faculty in planning courses of study.

III G. Diversity of the Program’s Majors and Graduates

Table 3.7 shows the gender and ethnic origin of students in the M.Ed. Early Childhood program. Overall, the student enrollment by gender has been 89% female and 11% male.

On average, 84% of the program’s majors since Fall 2001 have been white, 10% have been black, and 6% have belonged to other ethnic groups. There have been no International, Asian, or American Indian students in the program during this time period.

Gender	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Female	24 (92%)	24 (96%)	20 (83%)	19 (86%)
Male	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	4 (17%)	3 (14%)
Ethnicity				
Black	0	2 (8%)	4 (17%)	3 (14%)
Hispanic	1 (4%)	0	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
Multi-Racial	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	0
White	24 (92%)	22 (88%)	18 (75%)	18 (82%)

Table 3.7 Ethnic and gender diversity among M.Ed. Early Childhood majors

The gender and ethnic origin of program graduates since Fall 2001 is shown in Table 3.8. Overall, 5% of the program graduates have been male and 95% have been female. These figures are fairly consistent with the overall enrollment percentages for the program by gender (10% male and 90% female).

Overall, 15% of the students enrolled in the M.Ed. Early Childhood program have been from Black, Hispanic, or Multi-Racial ethnicities, and the overall percentage of Black, Hispanic, and Multi-Racial students graduating from the program since Fall 2001 is 14%. These figures are consistent, though care should continue to be taken to make sure that all students are progressing through the program toward graduation.

Gender	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Female	11 (91.7%)	8 (88.9%)	11 (100%)	11 (100%)
Male	1 (8.3%)	1 (11.1%)	0	0
Ethnicity				
Asian	0	0	0	0
Black	1 (8.3%)	0	0	3 (27.3%)
Hispanic	0	0	0	1 (9.1%)
American Indian	0	0	0	0
Multi-Racial	0	0	1 (9.1%)	0
White	11 (91.7%)	9 (100%)	10 (90.9%)	7 (63.6%)

Table 3.8 Ethnic and gender diversity among Early Childhood Education graduates

Students in the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood are from diverse age groups. The majority of students are between 21 and 40 years of age. Table 3.9 shows the age composition of all M.Ed. students in the Early Childhood program since 2001.

Age	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
21-25	6	8	8	7
26-30	8	6	5	6
31-40	9	7	4	7
41-50	2	3	6	2
51-60	1	1	1	0
Over 60	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Average</i>	<i>30.9</i>	<i>31.3</i>	<i>32.7</i>	<i>31.0</i>

Table 3.9: Age diversity among M.Ed. Early Childhood students

The numbers of students in each age group have remained fairly consistent since 2001 with the average age for M.Ed. students being 31.5 years. There are students entering the M.Ed. program soon after completing their undergraduate degrees, as well as students who teach for some time prior to entering the M.Ed. program. Additionally, for some students, the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood is a change of career. Many of these students work in other careers prior to returning to obtain their teaching certification and the Master’s degree. The age diversity adds to the quality of interactions among the Early Childhood students in classes.

III H. Cost-Effectiveness of Instructional Delivery in the Program’s Home Department

As shown below in Tables 3.10 and 3.11, the budget for the Department of Teacher Education represented approximately 13% of the total instructional costs for Columbus State University (CSU) from 2001 to 2004. During this time period, over \$1,000,000 of the department budget came from grant funds that, for the most part, supported the work of the Centers of Excellence (see note in Table 3.12). In 2004-2005, the department budget represented 8% of the total instructional costs at CSU. Considering that, in Fall 2004, 1340 (19%) of the 7224 students enrolled at CSU were majoring in a program offered through the Department of Teacher Education, instructional delivery in the department is very cost-effective.

For the programs in early childhood education, the cost per major has decreased each year since 2001. In 2004-2005, the cost per credit was \$143.00 compared to \$162.15 for the institution. The lower cost per credit is due to the large number of students enrolled in early childhood education courses.

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Department Budget*	\$3,116,951	\$3,176,287	\$3,143,501	\$2,032,092
Cost Per Major (Early Childhood Education Majors) <i>(Pro-Rated Expenditures/Number of Declared Majors)</i>	\$3,310	\$3,017	\$2,703	\$1,475
Credit Hours Taught Fall and Spring (Early Childhood Education majors)	3,892	4,479	4,680	5,099
Cost per Credit (Early Childhood Education majors)	\$288	\$269	\$255	\$143
* Note: Centers of Excellence units (ETTC, CRMC, Child Care R&R and Oxbow Meadows removed from academic departments in FY 2005).				

Table 3.10 Instructional Costs for Department of Teacher Education and Early Childhood Education Programs

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Instructional Costs	\$23,311,457.76	\$23,963,598.65	\$23,784,544.59	\$25,240,030.43
Total Credit Hours	116,543	133,777	148,797	155,654
Cost per Credit	\$200.02	\$179.13	\$159.85	\$162.15

Table 3.11 Total Instructional Costs at CSU

By offering the required early childhood education courses in the M.Ed. Early Childhood program on a rotating cycle, the number of students enrolled in these courses is high enough to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department. In addition, the program requires some of the same courses (e.g., Educational Psychology, Action Research, etc.) that are required in other M.Ed. programs. These courses have higher enrollments and thus help to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department.

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee (PAC) oversees the M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education and works to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers. Currently, we are aligning coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Early Childhood in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards. By responding to current initiatives and mandates, we hope to recruit more teachers into the M.Ed. program to make it more cost-effective.

III I. Program's Responsiveness to State Needs and Employer Demand for Program Graduates

Most graduates of the M.Ed. Early Childhood program are already teaching in an elementary school classroom. The expertise gained through the master's program contributes to these teachers' effectiveness in helping all students learn. Since 2001, graduates of the M.Ed. program who were not previously employed have had no trouble finding teaching jobs in early childhood.

After graduating from Columbus State, teachers, counselors, and leaders are asked to complete a survey about their preparation at CSU. Data from the most recent survey indicated that 84% (n = 31) of the graduates who responded to the survey felt that they had a thorough understanding of

how to teach and perform their professional duties. A similar survey of employers of Early Childhood Education alumni revealed that employers feel that CSU graduates are prepared when they enter the teaching profession. Table 3.12 shows the results of the employer survey.

	Content Pedagogy	Diversity	Communication	Technology	Professionalism
Well Prepared	60.0%	66.0%	63.0%	63.0%	86.0%
Prepared	40.0%	26.0%	30.0%	23.0%	10.0%
Somewhat Prepared	0.0%	6.0%	6.0%	10.0%	3.0%
Poorly Prepared	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Undecided	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%
Not Applicable	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 3.12 Employer Survey Results – Early Childhood Education Alumni (N = 30)

Graduates of the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program are also a valuable resource for our undergraduate program in early childhood. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our graduate programs in early childhood have helped to create a cadre of leaders within our Partner School Network. Graduates often serve CSU as pre-student teaching cooperating teachers and cooperating teachers for student teaching. These graduates are an invaluable asset in assisting with the development of our undergraduates.

To ensure that the Early Childhood Education program is responsive to state needs, we are engaged in the following efforts:

- aligning coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Early Childhood in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards,
- providing mentoring support for our first and second year program graduates, and
- working through the Partner School Network to meet specific needs and provide extra help and service to the students and teachers in our Partner Schools.

III J. Position of the Program’s Annual Degree Productivity among Comparable USG Programs

As indicated in Table 3.13, among the seven USG state universities that offer a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education, CSU ranks fifth in average number of degrees conferred. CSU is the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education.

Institution	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	Avg. of Four Years
State Universities					
University of West Georgia	59	47	54	48	52
Georgia Southwestern State University	24	55	63	44	46.5

Armstrong Atlantic State	0	29	72	63	41
North Georgia College & State University	19	11	24	21	18.75
Columbus State University	7	12	9	11	9.75
Albany State University	10	7	4	8	7.25
Augusta State University	4	6	3	4	4.25
Regional and Research Universities					
Georgia State University	47	26	64	85	55.5
Valdosta State University	17	43	41	17	29.5
University of Georgia	24	17	18	25	21
Georgia Southern University	11	9	8	31	14.75

Table 3.13 M.Ed. Early Childhood Education Degrees Conferred by Institution

III K. This Program's Contribution to Achieving CSU's Mission

The M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education helps CSU to accomplish its mission of serving the educational needs of a diverse region. By preparing highly qualified teachers for preschool through fifth grade, the program helps to improve the quality of education and the quality of life in the institution's service area.

IV. Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program at CSU is a viable one. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/PSC Board of Examiners in February 2005, the quality of the program is very strong. All NCATE/PSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced programs. In addition, program quality is enhanced by special opportunities available at CSU. Early Childhood Education majors have access to resources and professional development opportunities offered through the Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative (CRMC), Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCRRA), Center for Quality Teaching & Learning (CQTL), and Project STEADY (Sustained Teacher Education Advisement for the Defining Years).

The viability of the program is also ensured by the collaborative relationship that exists between the College of Education, Early Childhood Education program, and P-12 teachers. Representatives from each of these groups work together to make improvements to the early childhood education programs at CSU and to impact early childhood education in our region. The M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education is a valuable resource for teachers in our region who want to grow professionally and gain expertise in the field of early childhood education. Students in the M.Ed. program take what they learn and apply it in their own classrooms to help their students learn.

Graduates of the M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program are also a valuable resource for our undergraduate program in early childhood. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our graduate programs in early childhood have helped to create a cadre of leaders within our Partner School Network. Graduates often serve CSU as pre-student teaching cooperating teachers and cooperating teachers for student teaching. They are an invaluable asset in assisting with the development of our undergraduates.

Though small, the number of M.Ed. Early Childhood degrees conferred by CSU has been fairly consistent over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. As the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers a master's degree in Early Childhood Education, CSU provides early childhood teachers in its service region an opportunity to gain expertise in early childhood education. This is an opportunity that they might not have if CSU did not offer this degree program. With the need to provide highly-qualified teachers, we need to provide every possible opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and enhance their knowledge and skills in early childhood education.

V. Program Improvement Plan

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee (PAC) will oversee the following efforts to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers.

- Align coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Early Childhood (2005-2006). Work will be supported by a PRISM mini-grant.
- Explore ways to provide additional support for students in graduate early childhood courses (ongoing).
- Consider ways to connect the content of the graduate early childhood coursework to the P-5 curriculum (ongoing).
- Work to recruit teachers into the graduate program. Efforts are underway to consider additional ways to recruit students for the graduate programs. Additionally, faculty will be meeting with the graduating seniors and working with teachers in our Partner Schools to recruit for the graduate programs.

VI. Summary Recommendation

Recommendation: Maintain the Program at the Current Level

The program quality is very strong, but the number of degrees conferred each year is small. There are factors beyond our control that have an impact on the M.Ed. program. Since teachers can get a master's degree in any field and receive an increase in pay, some of the early childhood teachers in our service region have chosen to pursue a master's degree in an area other than early childhood.

As previously mentioned, CSU will continue to work to improve the current M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Georgia Performance Standards), improving the curriculum, providing better support and resources for students, and intensifying recruitment efforts. By enhancing the quality of the program, we hope to attract more potential students.