

CPR Report Submitted!

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- 5 **Institution:** Columbus State University
- 6 **Review Status:** Non-triggered Review
- 7 **Degree level:** Masters
- 8 **Degree acronym:** MED
- 9 **Degree/Major:** MEd in Early Childhood Education
- 10 **CIP Code:** 13121000
- 11 **College,**
11 **School/Division:** College of Education
- 12 **Department:** Teacher Education
- 13 **CPR Plan**
13 **followed:** Yes
- 14 **Future institutional**
14 **plans for program:** Maintain at present level
- 15 **Supplemental file:** EC MEd Exec-Sum.doc
- 16 **File Type:** MS Word
- 17 **CPR Web site:** aa.colstate.edu/assess/cprtbl.htm

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.