

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE ED.S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Major Findings of the Program Quality and Productivity

Program Quality: Very Strong

In February 2013, a continuing approval review of the teacher education program in the College of Education and Health Professions 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 (GAPSC). The 2008 NCATE and GAPSC Standards were used to assess the Unit and its program. The BOE judged all standards to be met for the unit and for all initial and advanced programs. There were no areas for improvement cited, and the team noted multiple areas of strength. Overall, the Ed.S. 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 Ed.S. Early Childhood program is small but has increased since 2007. Courses are offered on a one or two year cycle, some are cross-listed with Ed.D courses, and enrollment in courses is good. This helps to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department. The number of Ed.S. degrees conferred each year is small; however, most candidates in the Ed.S. program are full-time teachers and several may take longer to graduate. As the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers an education specialist degree in Early Childhood Education, CSU provides teachers in its service region an opportunity that they might not have otherwise, to gain expertise and leadership skills 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 Common Core which includes the CCGPS and PARCC Assessments in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards;

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee oversees the Ed.S. program in Early Childhood and works to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers.

Recommendations to improve program productivity are as follows:

- Create a plan to recruit and retain candidates in the program and support them through graduation.
- Closely monitor program trends to enable appropriate planning for all aspects of the program including scheduling of courses and securing faculty positions.
- Align coursework with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards. By responding to new initiatives, we hope to attract more teachers into the Ed.S. program.

Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The Ed.S. Early Childhood Education Program at CSU is viable. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/GAPSC Board of Examiners in February 2013, the quality of the program is very strong. All NCATE/GAPSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced program with no areas for improvement cited and multiple areas of strength identified. 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), Center for Assessment and Reading Education (CARE), the Center for Quality Teaching and Learning (CQTL), the Coca Cola Science Center, Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, and outreach program such as Summer Spectacular.

The viability of the program is also ensured by the collaborative relationship that exists between the College of Education and Health Professions and P-12 teachers, principals, and superintendents. Representatives from these groups work together to make improvements to the early childhood program at CSU and to positively impact early childhood education in our region. The Ed.S. program in early childhood is a valuable resource for elementary schools in our area.

Graduates of the Ed.S. Early Childhood Education program are also a valuable resource for our students in the undergraduate program. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our program in early childhood education have helped to create a cadre of leaders within our Partner School Network. Graduates often serve CSU as cooperating teachers in the field and serve on our advisory committees. The strength of the Partner School Network, the Principals' Round Table, the Educator Preparation Program Council, the ECE Advisory Committee, and the Educator Preparation Assembly is a testament to the support of our many stakeholders in the P-5 schools and community.

The number of Ed.S. degrees conferred in early childhood education is small but comparable to other USG state universities. The early childhood program at CSU is essential to preparing candidates to teach young children in this region.

Program Improvement Plan

Departmental Plans and Priorities	CPR Indicator	Projected Timeline
Connect program curriculum with the P-5 Common Core and PARCC Assessments.	Quality	2013- Ongoing
Develop a plan for recruitment and retention for ECE candidates.	Productivity Viability	2013-Ongoing
Develop a plan to infuse ideas related to teaching diverse learners throughout all program courses. Specifically, faculty will address the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and develop curriculum and field experiences for all ECE candidates.	Quality Productivity	2013 – Ongoing

The resources needed to accomplish these priorities should be minimal. Departmental resources will be allocated as necessary to accomplish these plans. The Early Childhood Program Coordinator will be provided one course release time each academic year to provide leadership to these tasks. The program coordinator will communicate additional resource requests as needed to the appropriate administrator within the College of Education and Health Professions at Columbus State University.

Recommendation: *Continue to Maintain and Enhance the Program*

The program' quality is very strong, and the enrollment has increased since 2007.

We will continue to work to improve the Ed.S. program in Early Childhood Education by responding to new initiatives (Common Core and PARCC Assessments), improving the curriculum, providing better support and resources for students, preparing P-12 teachers to teach online, developing a retention and graduation plan to improve program viability, and intensifying recruitment efforts.

By enhancing the quality of the program, we hope to continue attracting students to the Early Childhood Education Program.