

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE M.A.T. AND M.ED. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Major Findings of the Programs Quality and Productivity

Program Quality: Very Strong

In February 2013, a continuing approval review of the teacher education programs 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 programs. 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 M.A.T. and M.Ed. Early Childhood Education Programs are strong and prepares highly qualified teachers who are able to use their enhanced knowledge and expertise in their schools, districts and state.

Program Productivity: Above Average

Enrollment in the M.A.T. and M.Ed. Early Childhood programs has remained consistent with a five year average of 55 and ranks first in average enrollment among the four M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education. CSU ranks fifth in the number of M.A.T. and M.Ed. degrees conferred among nine comparable USG state universities. The average number of degrees conferred from 2007-2012 was 17 per year. Graduates of the program are in high demand.

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;
- implementing, fully, the edTPA evaluation instrument for student teachers and M.A.T. interns in the Fall of 2014.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee oversees the M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs 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 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 M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs.

Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The M.A.T. and M.Ed. Early Childhood Education Programs at CSU are viable. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/GAPSC Board of Examiners in February 2013, the quality of the programs are very strong. All NCATE/GAPSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced programs 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 programs such as Summer Spectacular.

The viability of the programs are 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 programs at CSU and to positively impact early childhood education in our region. The M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs in early childhood are a valuable resource for elementary schools in our area.

Graduates of the M.A.T. and M.Ed. Early Childhood Education programs 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 programs 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 M.A.T. and M.Ed. degrees conferred in early childhood education has a five year average of 17 and ranks fifth among nine comparable 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.	Quality Productivity	2013 – Ongoing
Full implement edTPA instrument for student teachers and interns.	Quality	Fall 2014-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 for 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 programs' quality is very strong, and the five year average for number of degrees conferred ranks fifth among nine state USG institutions.

CSU will continue to work to improve the M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs in Early Childhood Education by responding to new initiatives (Common Core and PARCC Assessments), improving the curriculum, aligning the curriculum with the edTPA model of teacher assessment model which is currently piloted for student teachers, 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 programs, we hope to continue attracting students to the Early Childhood Education Programs.