



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Hilary Seitz, Professor
Wei Hsiao, Professor
Gary Turner, Director, Kenai Peninsula College
Betty Walter, Interim Director, Kodiak College

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Early Childhood Development AAS

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): Nat'l Assoc. of Education for Young Children (NAEYC)

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage (KPC and KOD partner to offer the program for local cohorts as well as supporting distance delivery statewide.)

Members of the program review committee:

Hilary Seitz, Professor
Wei Hsiao, Professor

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences CAS contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,

2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and
3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriates and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The School of Education's AAS in Early Childhood (EC) contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by preparing students to work with children in private or non-profit preschools and childcare settings. Although initial licensure programs in SOE lost their accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, the AAS in EC is accredited by the National Association of Education for Your Children.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

Because Alaska faces a serious shortage of trained preschool specialists, one would expect program demand to be high. However, demand fell by 50% since 2013. Presumably, some of the decline was due to bad news about CAEP accreditation in other SOE programs, and the Spring 2019 elimination of the BA in Early Childhood, something that cut off the professional development for AAS students. As to efficiency, student credit hours in 2019 were approximately half the level in 2013, class sizes are considerably smaller, and the gap between instructional costs and instructional revenue (tuition) has grown since 2015. However, Institutional Research data for this program was captured before an increase in enrollments in Fall 2019. As to productivity, there are ups and downs in the number of degrees awarded with a low of 7 in 2018 and a high of 23 in 2019.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The program is nationally accredited, attesting to the quality of the program's documentation, evidence, and outcomes. The program mixes face-to-face instruction, internship opportunities, and online instruction to serve students across Alaska. Although UAA no longer has a BA in EC, faculty are working on connecting the AA to other degree options at UAA and elsewhere in the UA system.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

UAF offers an AAS in Early Childhood Education. The programs overlap in some ways and are distinctive in others. Certainly, the placement sites and supervision are distinct. Combined, the two programs produced 102 awards since 2019 (about 25 per year), with 49 coming from UAF and 44 coming from UAA.

Commendations and Recommendations

The faculty are commended for accreditation by National Association of Education for Young Children, and for developing a program that addresses a state need using a hybrid delivery method. They are also commended for providing a strong program report.

Decision

Continued review. There are many positive things about this program, but there are two significant challenges. First, it is housed in CAS which is faced with steeper budget cuts than any other college at UAA. The budget cuts are particularly problematic for programs – like this one – that do not cover their

instructional costs through tuition and rely on state appropriations through CAS. Moreover, accredited education programs require considerable faculty and staff time, and therefore, financial assistance, and expertise from a college office that is best found in a College of Education. Second, the uncertainty surrounding the administration of teacher preparation programs in the University of Alaska system makes it hard to know about the administrative future of this program. Therefore, I recommend that this program be reviewed again in 2021 to see if CAS has enough state appropriations to retain the program and where the program will stand relative to the Alaska College of Education.