



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

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

Cc: Hattie Harvey, Associate Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Early Childhood Special Education MEd

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): Council for Exceptional Children

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Hattie Harvey, Associate 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 appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The M.Ed in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) was designed to prepare a small but important group of specialist to work with children through age 5 who had developmental delays disabilities. As such, it was aligned with the health-related focus of UAA. The program was designed for students seeking initial licensure in this area, and for already-licensed educators who wanted further specialization in ECSE. Unfortunately, when UAA's School of Education lost accreditation for its initial licensure programs, this program lost an important group of students, namely those seeking initial licensure. The sole faculty member in the ECSE program then transferred from the School of Education to Psychology, leaving the program with the prospects of few students and no faculty. As such, admissions in the program were suspended in 2019.

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

Prior to admissions being suspended, 8-13 students were in the ECSE program in recent years, student credit hours were small, and tuition covered the instructional costs in some years but not others.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

All graduates of the program since 2015 passed their Praxis II test on early childhood special education.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

There is no other program in Alaska that trains people to work with infants, toddlers, and children through age 5 who have developmental disabilities or delays.

Commendations and Recommendations

The sole faculty member for this program is commended for nurturing a program that addressed a gap in health coverage in Alaska, and train the students to pass a national exam in the area. The faculty should also be commended for the hard work put into the expedited program review submission.

Decision

Deletion. Admissions to the program was suspended, and the faculty member transferred to a new department. The gap left by deleting this program should be addressed by the Board of Regents and the Alaska College of Education. Just because the program goes away does not mean the mission of the program is complete. Program deletion requires approval by BOR and NWCCU.