



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

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

Cc: Cathy Coulter, Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Language Education GC

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); currently pursuing council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP); Specialty Program Review (SPA) through Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Cathy Coulter, Professor
Ira Ortega, Associate Professor (resigned position in January 2020)

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 Graduate Certificate Language Education contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by preparing licensed educators to specialize in work with K12 students who are English Language Learners. Filling Alaska's gaps for pre-K and K12 teaching positions is a priority for the University of Alaska and its Board of Regents. One of those gaps is for specialists who are better prepared to work with the diversity of languages in Alaska's schools. The three-semester program is currently accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). It is preparing for accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

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

Program demand is directly linked to a \$1.75 million grant that covered students' tuition until 2018. Once the grant ended, the number of students in the program plummeted from 41 in 2018 to 5 in 2019. Recruitment efforts seek to start a rebound this year. As to efficiency, program faculty showed different numbers in January 2020 then were prepared for them in October 2019. Regardless, either set of numbers show decreasing student credit hours, decreasing class sizes, and a steep deficit between (a) the tuition CAS gets to cover the courses and (b) the cost of delivering the courses. With the end of the grant that funded students, not only did program demand drop, so to did the number of awards, going from 34 in 2018 to 2 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 entire program is offered online, allowing teachers from across Alaska to train in work with English Language Learners.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

UAF offers a Master degree in Second Language Acquisition, Bilingual Education and Literacy with an ESL endorsement, however, it is a full Masters degree rather than UAA's three-semester graduate certificate.

Commendations and Recommendations

The small core of faculty are commended for accreditation by the NCATE and TESOL. They are commended for working toward CAEP accreditation and looking for ways to recruit more students. The faculty also should be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

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.