



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

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

Cc: Tim Jester, Professor
Hsing Wen Hu, Professor; Associate Director, School of Education

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Teaching and Learning MEd

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Tim Jester, Professor
Hsing Wen Hu, Professor; Associate Director, School of Education

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 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 Teaching and Learning provides graduate-level training for K12 teachers who seek additional professional development. Although it does not lead to any additional level of professional licensure, it does provide a formal but flexible way for current K12 teachers to have professional development that culminates in a graduate-level degree, making them eligible for a step increase in their salaries and positioning them for career opportunities as leaders and mentors of other teachers.

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

Demand for the program grew steadily since 2013, with growing numbers of majors. Because so much of the coursework students take is interdisciplinary across other School of Education programs, it is difficult to triangulate down to how many student credits are drawn from various School of Education course offerings, but it is reasonable to assume that with the growing number of Teaching & Learning majors there is a growing number of student credits in this program. As to the program's efficiency, it is, again, hard to quantify because of the interdisciplinary nature of the program. Institutional research data suggest, however, that the core courses under the EDTL prefix do not cover their instructional costs, something that is the rule for graduate programs in CAS. As to productivity, the program showed a strong and steady growth in the number of awards such that in the last three years the program averaged 17 awards per year, far above average among CAS's graduate programs.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

As is customary with programs in Education, program assessment is taken seriously by faculty in the Teaching & Learning program, and there is evidence that students regularly meet the program's student learning outcomes.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

The program fills an important role in Alaska. It is not enough just to produce new teachers, we must retain them. This program contributes to that effort, doing so for students who are located across Alaska.

Commendations and Recommendations

Program faculty are commended for the design, implementation and growth of this program. 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, benefit from 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.