

AY20 Expedited Program Review – Optional Program Response to the Dean’s Findings Form

Date: February 27, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Hattie Harvey, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Cc: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Claudia Dybdahl, Interim Director, School of Education

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review: Optional Program Response to Dean’s Recommendation

Program/s in this review: Early Childhood Special Education, Masters of Education

Program response to dean’s findings:

The **Master’s degree in Early Childhood Special Education is the only program in the state of Alaska which prepares personnel to fulfill the workforce needs to serve Alaska’s infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities and developmental delays and their families** as early interventionists and preschool special educators. In agreement with Dean Petraitis, it is imperative that the Board of Regents and the Alaska College of Education Teacher Education Council address this gap if it cannot be filled at UAA.

Addressing Workforce Need in the UA System

Given the College of Arts and Sciences’ budget reduction along with the proposed deletion of this program, **it is imperative that UAA administration emphasize in both their future decisions and to the Board of Regents the crisis that the absence of this program creates for meeting workforce demands.** Both Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education personnel are identified as a critical shortage in the state of Alaska and the personnel demand exceeds the available supply. As one example, in the proposed FY21 Anchorage School District budget an identified need to increase special education pre-K teachers and TAs was identified, reflecting this workforce need. I would emphasize a recommendation to the Board of Regents about accountability reporting regarding the status of early childhood special education teacher preparation gap by the Alaska College of Education Dean Atwater who was tasked with the responsibility for coordinating efforts in teacher preparation. *For additional statewide recommendations see EPR.*

Dean’s Report Enrollment Inaccuracies

Dean Petraitis stated, “unfortunately, when the UAA’s School of Education lost accreditation for initial licensure programs, this program lost an important group of students, namely those seeking initial licensure.” That is inaccurate as the 7-year trend shows that approximately half of the enrolled student were initial licensure seeking, while the other half were seeking an endorsement on an existing teacher certification. As one example, last year between Spring 2019, Summer 2019 and Fall 2019 a total of three initial licensure students graduated and four seeking their birth – five special education endorsement graduated from the M.Ed. in ECSE program for a total of seven graduates (this is not reflected accurately in IR data which shows a total of 4 graduates in 2019). This is important to note since the program historically has equally served both initial and endorsement seeking candidates.

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Request to Remove/Edit Dean’s Statement

I respectfully request that Dean Petraitis’ statement be removed or edited: “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.” This insinuates the deletion of a program is the responsibility of faculty attrition and does not account for the dismantling nor the chaos experienced in the School of Education at this time. As the prior “sole” faculty member in the ECSE program I will state for the record that had the School of Education been financially and administratively supported, a commitment from the University system for continuation (not just “continued review” which the M.Ed. ECSE program received from the Spring 2019 EPR), and been provided the resources necessary for program growth, then the resulting decision to move departments may have had a different outcome. I think it is inappropriate to put this program deletion responsibility on an individual without acknowledging the context of the School of Education in Spring 2019.

In summary, this program is essential to supporting our state workforce development needs to service children birth – age 5 who experience disabilities or developmental delays and their families, and should be addressed within the UA system with clear accountability on implementation.