

B.S. Ed. in Early Childhood Education

13.1209

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY

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| 1. | Reporting Institution | Eastern Illinois University |
| 2. | Program Reviewed | B.S. Ed. in Early Childhood Education |
| 3. | Date | January 2020 |
| 4. | Contact Person: | Dr. Jeanne Okrasinski |
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5. Overview:

The Department of Teaching, Learning, and Foundations is committed to fostering the development of professional educators within diverse settings while building upon the natural leadership abilities of our students. We strive to model innovative techniques & reflective practices in order to provide our students with unique opportunities to translate theory & research into effective & practical instructional applications. Through modeling, mentoring and providing services, we support and pursue local & global partnerships & participate in collaborative scholarly endeavors. The program has a tradition of excellence in teacher education. Graduates are recruited by school districts throughout the state and across the country. Graduates of the Early Childhood program have been successful in their career paths. Results from the 2018 Alumni Survey indicate that 93% of the Elementary Education respondents are employed full time.

Students are recognized for their outstanding work at the university, regional and national levels. Since 2012, 7 undergraduate students were selected to present at the National Undergraduate Research Fair. The Student Association for the Education of the Young Child (SAEYC) is affiliated with the National Association for the Education of the Young Child. SAEYC has been active for 10 years. Undergraduate Early Childhood majors were instrumental in organizing this student chapter on the EIU campus.

Strengths of the current Early Childhood education program include early field experiences and partnerships with area schools and agencies providing services to young children. Opportunities provide a framework for pre-service teachers to link theory with practice. The Early Childhood program was successful in both the SPA review and CAEP review during this evaluation period. The department holds an annual meeting in August to review program and student data and plan for course/program revisions. Results from program and unit data drive program changes. As the program looks to the future, new ways to address teacher preparation in the early grades are being explored including increased Field Experience, more explicit inclusion of differentiation, integrated learning, and planning and teaching diverse learners, including English Language Learners.

6. Major Findings and Recommendations

6 a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program/disciplinary context, e.g., (1) changes in the overall discipline or field; (2) student demand; (3) societal needs; (4) institutional context for offering the degree; (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; and (6) other.

Student enrollment in education programs around the state and country have seen a major decline since 2012. Enrollment in the university and the department began its decline in 2014. Becoming a teacher was not at the forefront of high school students' minds when bad press and safety concerns were at their height. In the previous IBHE report, the average number of students enrolled in the program was approximately 201 in any given year. In this current cycle, we are only averaging approximately 100 students in a given year. This decline in enrollment is also reported in data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics which reports a decline in the number of educational degrees awarded. In addition changes to the state testing system included raising the passing score for the Illinois Basic Skills Test. Fortunately, the State amended the Basic Skills test to allow for the ACT/SAT to be counted. In the summer of 2019, the state removed the requirements for an entrance exam which has opened the door for many more students to pursue early childhood education as their major.

Early Childhood education has ranged from a low of 83 students in 2018 to a high of 115 in 2012. The number of males in the program remains minimal. Ethnic diversity in the program averages 21.5%. Our recruitment efforts are being directed in multiple ways. First, we seek to increase enrollment locally in order to better service our rural schools. Secondly, we will begin offering dual credit options to students in a few districts in hopes of drawing them to EIU as well, and into education programs.

6b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement;

The department collects student performance data on all undergraduate students as they progress throughout the program, including Student Teaching. Assessments align with state and national standards, is collected and analyzed through Live Text, a web-based data collection and portfolio system used by all teacher education candidates. This data shows that in excess of 97% of candidates are achieving Level 4 or 5 (Level 5=Exceeds Standards) on all standard-based assessments. Data revealed that candidates in the program were successful in understanding and delivering content knowledge, attained a high degree of pedagogical knowledge, and exemplify excellent dispositions in the teaching profession. Faculty analysis of assessment results indicate that although our students meet standards in all areas they did not perform as well in the following areas: Diversity, Differentiation and Technology. This was reaffirmed by comments made from our Advisory Committee.

State content test results were mixed during this reporting cycle. When the content test was changed, it took the faculty a semester or two to implement the changes necessary to ensure candidate success on the exam. Once those changes were in place, our students began passing the test on the first try, back in the 80% range. Our goal is to continue to strengthen the program and increase the "first attempt" rate to the mid 90% range.

6c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes;

The Department’s Curriculum Committee has developed a multi-phase curriculum plan to improve test scores in the areas of Diversity, Differentiation and Technology Integration. Several individual instructors are piloting specific assignments in class that relate to the inclusion of diversity, differentiation and technology. Results of these piloted projects will be collected and will be reviewed for potential inclusion in our generic syllabi. The Department Assessment Committee has reviewed and revised our assessment rubrics for lesson planning and have developed an assessment rubric to review student dispositions.

Specific to our early childhood program, we have shifted our practicum placements so that every early childhood major will have a Kindergarten classroom teaching experience, as well as hours in the birth-age 5 range, and a placement in 1st or 2nd grade. Since early childhood teachers are the only licensed practitioners able to teach in Kindergarten, we felt it critical to prepare our students with a 4-5 week intensive practicum. This placement occurs either late junior year or just prior to student teaching.

6d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes.

All teacher education programs in the State of Illinois are will be looking to to realign their programs to include the new Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS). Curriculum work will continue as the undergraduate program makes course revision to include the new IPTS. The department will monitor state licensure requirements while using assessment data to make needed program/course revisions.

7. no assigned issues

8 Outcome

8.1 Decision

Program in Good Standing

Program flagged for Priority Review

Program Enrollment Suspended

8.2 Explanation – PROVOST FEEDBACK

The program's placement rate is outstanding as the program is clearly meeting a need for the region and the state. As the report demonstrates, enrollment and graduation rates exceed IBHE guidelines. The program's assessment plan is being used to make program adjustments and establish new standards of excellence—specifically meeting the first time pass rate target (~90%). This program continues to be in “good standing”.