

April 25, 2014

Response to Departmental Review

First of all, I wish to extend gratitude to the Review Evaluation Team for their time to review our programs and the conscientious feedback provided to us. We recognize their efforts and thank the team for their insights.

Below, I provide a response to the comments provided by the Review Evaluation Team.

Standard A – MISSION STATEMENT

The review team recommended that the mission of the college, the Packer Center, and roles, responsibilities, and governance of programs within the college and department be clearly defined, that channels of communication be clarified, and that decision making protocols be clearly detailed. In response to this recommendation, the administration, faculty, and staff will continue to meet and write specific guidelines and roles. These guidelines will be articulated so as to clearly delineate the roles and decision making protocols in the college and department.

Standard B—CURRICULUM

The Family Studies faculty will continue identifying and aligning the curriculum with the NCFR 10 substance areas for Certified Family Life Educators. Furthermore, the Family Studies faculty will identify the core courses that meet the 10 standards for CFLE's and then identify and develop elective courses in which students could specialize (e.g., Military Families, Child Life, etc.).

The Early Childhood/Early Childhood Education faculty will continue to clarify and align curriculum with the policies and curriculum offered in the Melba S. Lehner (MSL) Children's School. To address this issue, the department has implemented an Executive Committee comprised of EC/ECE Faculty and MSL Children's School Staff. This committee is charged with communicating, clarifying, and collaborating on revisions of the mission and vision statement, policies and procedures in the MSL Children's School, curriculum, and alignment of EC/ECE university courses, curriculum in the MSL Children's School, and NAEYC standards. This group will continue to meet and work on resolving inconsistencies and misunderstandings between all concerned parties. The policies and procedure manual for the MSL Children's School is being revised with the goal of aligning university curriculum with MSL Children's School teaching practices and research opportunities for faculty and students. This issue is a high priority for the faculty and staff in the department.

Standard C—STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

In response to the observation that current assessment tools for the Family Studies curriculum are not clearly aligned with individual courses and assignments, the faculty will continue to clarify course objectives and the connection with specific learning activities (e.g., exams, quizzes, papers, assignments, etc.). This alignment has begun for all courses in the Family Studies curriculum and will continue each semester. Outcome data will be collected to identify the number of students meeting minimum standards for all courses in the Family Studies program. In regard to the portfolio, there will be more clear communication with students in the syllabus on which assignments and other evidence/artifacts they might place within each of the 11 content areas.

The observation that the assessment plan for EC/ECE is not feasible or manageable is noted. Additionally, a recognition of greater alignment between the five measures of thresholds for acceptable performance and the selection of artifacts from courses is noted. The EC/ECE faculty will make revisions of assessment plans and reports to address these concerns. Additionally, the EC/ECE faculty will indicate where the base material for learning outcomes are introduced, developed, and then mastered.

We thank the review team for the recommendation that assessment plans, data, and documents be manageable and interpretable so as to allow for data-driven revisions of programs. We will revise our assessment plans accordingly.

Standard D—ADVISING

We appreciate the affirmation that students receive excellent advising. We will continue to provide advising to meet programmatic and student needs.

Standard E—FACULTY

The recognition of the collegial atmosphere that exists among faculty is noted. We appreciate the recognition of lower salaries and the overload teaching activities occurring in our department. The overload teaching does detract faculty from other activities that would further strengthen our program and university. We do, however, note and appreciate the efforts made by administration in this area.

Standard F—SUPPORT (STAFF, ADMINISTRATION, FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND LIBRARY)

We acknowledge the feedback on work-life issues. The Department Chair makes reasonable attempts to be accommodating in flexible scheduling to meet outside demands. The Administrative Assistant is provided flexibility to meet family demands. Planning and coordination of work activities will continue to facilitate the prioritization of tasks, assignments, and roles. We also note the recognition of deficiencies in the heating and cooling system in the McKay Education Building.

Standard G—RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES

We appreciate the recognition of our community partnerships. We take pride in our external relationships and will continue to foster these connections.

Standard H—RESULTS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEWS

The recognition of addressing issues identified in the previous department review is noted.

In closing, we thank the review team for their insights and comments. These will be most helpful as we move forward in improving our programs. The faculty and staff will conscientiously work at addressing the feedback provided by the committee.

Sincerely,

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