**Academic Program Review: Self-Study**

***Instructions:*** *The following pages will guide your submission of your academic program review self-study. Please type your responses directly into the document. The completed self-study instrument and all attachments must be submitted to the Academic Program Review Coordinator and your Academic Dean by September 1.*

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| **Program Under Review** |
| **Degree(s):**  Early Childhood Education AAS- Infant/Toddler  Early Childhood Education AAS- Preschool\*  \*This degree is Nationally Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Commission for Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation, and has been renamed **Early Childhood Education AAS** beginning AY 2015-16.  Note: The Early Childhood Education Family Childcare AAS and the Early Childhood Education Management AAS have been deleted effective Fall 2015, and will not be covered in this review. |
| **Certificate(s):**  Early Childhood Education- Family Childcare Certificate  Early Childhood Education- Infant/ Toddler Certificate  Early Childhood Education- Management Certificate  Early Childhood Education- Preschool Certificate |
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| **Program Description, Vision and Outcomes** |
| **What is the description of the program as stated in the current CAC catalog:**  Overall ECE Program Description:  The Early Childhood Education program at Central Arizona College (CAC) improves the quality of early childhood programs by providing high quality, responsive, affordable and accessible education to a diverse community. We do this by following the guidelines and standards for early childhood professional preparation programs as well as the code of ethics that have been developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC has determined 6 critical standards that graduates of our program, whether it is with a certificate or a degree, should be knowledgeable of and be able to put into practice.  The CAC Early Childhood Education A.A.S. Degree has received National Accreditation through the NAEYC Commission on Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation. |
| **Does your program have any other written mission or vision statements which do not appear in the catalog? If yes, please write them below and indicate where they appear.**  Yes. The program has mission and vision statements, as well as a Conceptual Framework as required by our accreditation.  **Vision:** Central Arizona College's Early Childhood Education program is a model of excellence for early childhood professional development.  **Mission:** Central Arizona College's Early Childhood Education program engages students in innovative and effective learning experiences that positively impact their lives as well as children, families, and the community.  These documents are available online at: <http://centralaz.edu/Home/Academics/Divisions_and_Programs/Early_Childhood_Education_Program.htm>  <http://centralaz.edu/Documents/ECE/FinalConceptualFramework_2014.pdf>  These documents, as well as other relevant accreditation documents, are also included in the Blackboard course shell for every ECE course. |
| **Describe how the program’s description, mission and/or vision aligns with the College’s Mission**:  The vision and mission of the ECE Program closely aligns with the vision of the college to be a leader of innovative learner success and the center for educational opportunities in our diverse communities. The ECE Program at CAC has always been regarded as an innovative leader in the State of Arizona in Early Childhood Education curriculum and programs. Much like the College Mission, it is our mission to promote lifelong learning and positively impact the lives of children and families in our diverse communities. |
| **What are the student learning outcomes for the degree or certificate as currently indicated in ACRES:**  **ECE Program Measurable Student Learning Outcomes:**  1. (Analysis Level) Analyze and explain the multiple historical, philosophical, and social foundations of the early childhood profession and how these influence current research, thought, and practice. (CSLO 1 & 2)  2. (Analysis Level) Analyze and explain the special conditions that may affect the development of young children, birth through age eight. (CSLO 2 & 4)  3. (Synthesis Level) Plan a learning environment for young children that is responsive to each child's physical health, intellectual, and emotional well-being, and nutritional and safety needs. (CSLO 3 & 4)  4. (Evaluation Level) Justify and explain the importance of establishing and maintaining positive, productive, reciprocal relationships with families. (CSLO 1 & 2)  5. (Synthesis Level) Design strategies that promote developmentally and culturally appropriate practices, and are inclusive of young children with diverse abilities.  6. (Evaluation Level) Describe and defend the principles and theories of child development. (CSLO 2 & 4)  7. (Evaluation Level) Demonstrate the ability to make and defend professional decisions based on the knowledge of early childhood theories and practices, and the principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. (CSLO 2, 3 & 4)  8. (Evaluation Level) Interpret, critique, and apply ECE knowledge and skills into a variety of areas for curriculum development that encourage young children's growth and development. (CSLO 2 & 4) |
| **Are the outcomes from your program determined or influenced by any external organization, agency, or accreditor? If so, please explain.**Yes. The student learning outcomes for our program are influenced by the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation. These Standards are made available to students on the CAC ECE website, and are included in the Blackboard course shells for every ECE course.  Please see: <http://centralaz.edu/Documents/ECE/Standards_Summary.pdf> |

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| **Program Enrollment and Graduation Trends** |
| Summarize the program enrollment data for the past 5 years in the chart below:  Program data disaggregated by Degree and Certificate program is only available for the last two semesters.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Degree/Certificate | Fall 15 | Spring 15 | | AAS ECE Infant Toddler | 11 | 44 | | AAS ECE Preschool | 43 | 38 | | Certificate ECE Family | 7 | 5 | | Certificate ECE Infant Toddler | 13 | 18 | | Certificate ECE Management | 4 | 3 | | Certificate ECE Preschool | 35 | 42 |      |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Total ECE Enrollment | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | | Unduplicated Head Count | 145 | 131 | 204 | 176 | 259 |   Total unduplicated student headcount 2011-2015 is 521 students. |
| **Discuss and explain the factors influencing the enrollment trends:**  Over the years, we have found that our enrollment trends have been influenced by the economy and job availability. Traditionally, our program enrollment is students who are currently employed and are required to gain credentials or degrees to maintain employment. When the economy took at downturn in 2008, a number of private and home child care centers were forced to close limiting job availability. However, in the years previous to those included in the table, when unemployment rates were up, we also saw a spike in our program enrollment as state and federal programs supported people in going back to school. We work closely with our ECE Advisory Board to stay on top of the workforce demand in Pinal County. |
| **How has the program typically recruited students and marketed the program:**  One of the major ways we market our program is connected to the Professional Career Pathway Project (PCPP) Grant that our department administers for the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The PCPP is a scholarship program that provides funding for college coursework for students who work in the field of early childhood education throughout the State of Arizona. The PCPP Program Specialists attend ECE conferences and career fairs across the state and recruit scholars for the program. Although the PCPP is a partnership with the 16 other ECE programs at community colleges throughout the state, a number of scholars elect to attend CAC because of our history of providing quality, affordable, comprehensive, online educational opportunities. |
| **Summarize the program graduation rate trends for the past 5 years in the chart below:**  Please see the attached ***Early Childhood Education Program Graduation Data 2010-2015*** spreadsheet. |
| Discuss and explain the graduation trends. What efforts has the program made to help students achieve completion?  Program enrollment is not cohort based, and students are not required to follow a particular sequence of courses. As previously mentioned, the majority of our students are currently employed in the ECE field and are often required by employers to take a courses on specific topics. Some employers require students to be enrolled in a certain number of credits per semester, and others allow for flexibility as long as students are making satisfactory progress toward degree completion. While this allows for flexibility for enrollment within the program, it makes it difficult to track student data, average length of time it takes for students to move through the program, and completion rates.   Ongoing scholarship funding through the PCPP grant and other state funded scholarship programs, and personalized advising by department staff are two strategies the program has utilized to help support completion. |

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| **Program Curriculum:**  *Submit a completed Curriculum Comparison Chart along with the self-study, comparing the CAC program curriculum to three similar programs, for each Degree and Certificate discussed in this self-study. Ideally compare to other Arizona programs, and out of state if necessary.* |
| Using information gained from your curriculum comparisons, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current program curriculum for each degree or certificate.  **A note about the ongoing ECE Departmental Curriculum Revision Process**  During the 2014-2015 academic year, with feedback from students, stakeholders, and the ECE Advisory Board, the new ECE Director and faculty began the process of a complete curriculum revision of all of the ECE degrees and certificates. There were a few major objectives for phase one of this revision:   * Create a core of foundational courses common to all ECE certificates and degrees * Update program MSLO’s to align with NAEYC Accreditation Standards * Eliminate/ combine one credit courses that were created many years ago, and formatted to meet the standards of the national Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential * Streamline degree programs to help students move toward degree completion and shift program focus toward upward mobility (transfer) rather than continuing to encourage students to collect a number of lateral degrees that the industry does not require, are not transferable, and do not necessarily increase student marketability or earning potential. It was determined through this process that the AAS degrees in ECE Management and Family Childcare should be eliminated.   Phase two of the curriculum revision process will include taking a closer look at the additional course work for each degree and certificate program.  **Early Childhood Education Degrees**  **AAS ECE Infant Toddler** – There is currently only one other Infant Toddler AAS degree in the state of Arizona (Northland Pioneer College), so the ECE Infant Toddler curriculum was also compared with New Mexico’s fully articulated Associate Level ECE Infant Toddler Studies curriculum. With the addition of the ECE core through the program curriculum revision process, our Infant Toddler Curriculum is now more similar to the articulated curriculum taught in New Mexico. The current curriculum is also similar to the NPC curriculum in that the Infant Toddler specific courses are one credit units. The plan for phase two of the Infant Toddler degree revision is to broaden the focus of the course work to include the current (and upcoming) workforce demand for a variety of occupations in the family infant toddler field including home visitors, early intervention specialists, as well as infant toddler teachers. The one credit courses will be eliminated and replaced with three credit courses that address NAEYC Standards, National Infant Mental Health Competencies, and early childhood special education / early intervention competencies.  **AAS ECE Preschool (AAS Early Childhood Education)-** There are a number of different Arizona comparisons for this degree, and for this review our degree has been compared to the two other Arizona NAEYC ECADA accredited degrees (Pima Community College, and Paradise Valley Community College), and Eastern Arizona College. The comparison shows that our degree requires more ECE specific credits than other degrees in the state. The recent curriculum revision to combine one credit courses and create a core of ECE courses common to our degrees has lessened the number of courses we teach, but has not reduced the number of ECE credit hours required for the degree. Two out of the four degree programs reviewed required 64 total credit hours, Paradise Valley CC required 61-64 credits, and Pima CC requires only 60 credits. This variability in the number of credits required for the degree was discussed at a recent PCPP Collaborator’s meeting, and it was noted that one important reason PCC requires less total hours for the degree is the “hidden course work” such as pre-requisites and developmental courses that are required for degree completion. If there is more space for elective courses in a degree plan, some of the pre-reqs can then count toward degree completion while simultaneously helping students get into the classes they need for the degree. This will be an interesting notion to consider as we move into phase two of the curriculum revision process that will involve taking a closer look at the courses required beyond our newly developed ECE core.  **ECE Certificates**  **ECE Family Child Care-** We compared this certificate with three other Arizona programs, and the range of credit hours required for this certificate is 16-29. Our certificate requires the most. Realizing the other family child care certificates require considerably less credits will certainly influence the decisions we make in part two of our curriculum revision process for this certificate.  **ECE Infant Toddler-** While there are not three Arizona Infant Toddler degree programs to compare our AAS to, there are actually more than three Infant Toddler certificate programs in the state; however, most of these certificate programs are designed to help students prepare to apply for the National Infant Toddler CDA Credential. In part two of our curriculum revision for this certificate, we will need to determine if we should keep our certificate focused on preparation for the CDA credential (primarily for teachers of infants and toddlers), or if we should also expand the certificate focus to broader careers in the field of family and infant toddler studies.  **ECE Preschool-** Our comparisons for this certificate showed that the range of credit hours required across that state is 17-41. NPC and CAC both require 26 hours, Arizona Western College requires 17 credits, and Glendale CC requires 41 credits. Based on our comparison of the Preschool AAS curriculum, if we decide to reduce the number of credit hours required for the AAS degree, we will most certainly reduce the number of credits beyond the ECE core that we require for this certificate as well.  **ECE Management-** This certificate could only be compared to two other programs in the state. While our certificate requires the fewest number of credit hours, the curriculum also appears to be the most relevant to the actual management and supervision of ECE programs. This certificate only requires four additional courses beyond the ECE core, and after the courses are revised and updated in phase two, this certificate will be marketed to those who already have ECE degrees and need/want additional course work on how to be an effective leader in early childhood settings. |
| Discuss how the program gets feedback on its program and curriculum from external sources, suchas advisory boards, employers, articulation task forces, accreditors, etc.  The program gets feedback from a number of external sources. The field of Early Childhood Education in Arizona has a number of active work groups and committees in addition to the mandated ATF group. Program staff are active members of the First Things First Professional Development Work Group, the BUILD AZ steering committee, and the program director is the current chair of FTF PDWG articulation sub-committee, among others. The program also gets feed back from the Advisory Board required for our Accreditation. |
| Indicate any external accreditations which the program has. Are there any available accreditations which the program does not have, but maybenefit from seeking?  The AAS ECE Preschool Degree (renamed for AY 2015-2016 AAS Early Childhood Education) is Nationally Accredited by the NAEYC Commission for Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA). Additional degrees may also be eligible for NAEYC Accreditation. This link provides more information about the NAEYC ECADA <http://www.naeyc.org/ecada/files/ecada/ECADA%20Benefits%20flyers.pdf> |
| Discuss how the program supports current or future needs for the job market in Pinal County, the state of Arizona, and/or the United States.  As mentioned in the section regarding program enrollment, our program is engaged in educating students who are currently in the workforce. Most of our students are either employed in the field and are trying to meet the educational requirements necessary to maintain employment. Anecdotally we have noticed that because of the availability of scholarship funding available in this state for those working in the ECE field, a number of our students become employed during the course of their degree program. |
| For degree programs, identify any specific in-state baccalaureate programs into which this program is particularly suited for transfer.  The department is still working to identify suitable transfer options for our students. Northern Arizona University, Prescott College, and University of Arizona South have BAS degrees in Early Childhood Education that have been suitable transfer options for the AAS ECE Preschool (AAS Early Childhood Education) Degree. These options are being revisited as a result of the recent curriculum revision. |
| Indicate any articulation agreements in place for degree graduates. No formal transfer agreements are in place at this time. |

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| **Program Specific Resources:**  *In this section please focus on program specific resource. You may but do not have to discuss resources available to the college at large such as Blackboard, the Learning Centers, Library, etc. However, if these resources are impacting your program in a positive or negative way which you would like to discuss, please do so.* |
| Discuss the adequacy of the financial and budgetary resources available to the program over the past 5 years:  The program has financial and budgetary resources available to support both the program operations and travel costs associated with attending local and regional ECE meetings and events, and national conferences required to support program accreditation. Grant programs administered by the program also help support the programs operational and travel costs. |
| Discuss the adequacy of the human resources available to the program over the past 5 years: There are adequate human resources available to the program. |
| Discuss the adequacy of the technological resources available to the program over the past 5 years: Over the past five years there have been adequate technology recourses available to the program. The program curriculum is fully online, and we have been appreciative of the support we have received to make this possible. We have had adequate support in implementing Blackboard with our teaching staff as well as a population of students that are not always comfortable with using technology. |
| Discuss the adequacy of the physical (building space, classrooms, labs, etc) resources available to the program over the past 5 years:  In order to address the recent enrollment shift to a more “traditional” student population, the program is diligently working to create a face to face/ I-TV cohort, and the availability of I-TV space and resources is quickly becoming an issue for course scheduling. |
| Discuss the adequacy of the academic support resources available to the program and its students over the past 5 years:  Academic support resources are sufficient for our needs. Due to recent curriculum revisions and complexity of our degree offerings, we strongly encourage our students to seek academic advising directly from the ECE department or PCPP scholarship staff. |
| Discuss the adequacy of the student support resources available to the program and its students over the past 5 years: Feedback from our new, younger student demographic is that they would like more events and enhancements on campus that would help them feel like they were more a part of a traditional college community. |

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| **Program Effectiveness** |
| Describe how you measure the success of degree and certificate program graduates in achieving the degree and/or certificate program student learning outcomes. What data have you collected that indicates the level of student success of these outcomes? And According to the data, how well have students achieved these outcomes during the past 5 years?  The primary way we measure the success of our programs is by collecting and analyzing data for our accreditation. Our accreditation requires that we collect data on at least five key assessments that are embedded throughout our curriculum. The majority of our accreditation key assessments are included in the ECE Core courses, and therefore the data that we collect for accreditation tells us how well students are mastering the learning outcomes for all of our degrees and certificates, even though they are not all NAEYC Accredited.  Each year we are required to submit an Annual Report to our accrediting body and share at least two rounds of data for one of our five key assessments. The Annual Report provides the program with an ongoing opportunity to use outcomes data to evaluate student success, and to use data to inform our programs continuous improvement process.  ***Our 2015 Annual Report is attached*** and includes our most recent analysis of how well our students have achieved the NAEYC Standards, the Program Measurable Student Learning Outcomes, and the College CSLO’s. |
| If you have data which indicates the degree to which students in the program are achieving the college’s Common Student Learning Outcomes please share and explain the data.  The data collected for the key assessment in our capstone course has recently been aligned to the college’s CSLO’s, and the new MSLO’s that have been created for our program as a part of our curriculum revision process have also been aligned to the CAC CSLO’s. In addition to the six NAEYC Standards our program covers, there are also five Supportive Skills that are addressed as a part of the accreditation process. These Supportive Skills are very similar to the College CSLO’s. As we continue to collect and analyze data for our accreditation, we will also be able to review how well are students are doing achieving the Common Student Learning Outcomes for the College. |
| How many program enrollees or graduates studied at an in-state baccalaureate level institution during the past 5 years? Put the data in the table below.  This data is not available. There is not a specific process in place at the College or within the department to track this data for our program. |
| If a degree is intended for transfer, or has transfer articulation agreements in place, indicate how the degree program supports students with continuing their education at CAC or other institutions.  There are no current transfer or articulation agreements in place for our program. |
| Describe the level of success (via completion rates, GPA, etc.) the program’s prior students have achieved at transfer institutions.  Even though there are no current transfer or articulation agreements in place for the program, the program review process has taught us that we need to create internal methods to track student data including enrollment, degree completion, and transfer rates and student progress toward baccalaureate degrees once agreements are in place. |
| If a degree or certificate is designed to lead directly into the workforce, describe the success of students in obtaining a job in the field of study upon graduation. Please provide any qualitative or quantitative data you have:  As previously mentioned, the majority of our students are either currently employed in the field when they begin our degree program, or become employed throughout the course of the program. |
| If your program serves to prepare a student for external certification or licensure of any kind identify the certification or license and the percentage of program graduates who earn/achieve it. Put data in the table below.  N/A |

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| **Program Alignment with Institutional Goals:**  *Describe how the program has directly or indirectly is helping the College achieve its current strategic goals.* |
| The Vision, Mission, and Conceptual Framework of the program is aligned with the CAC strategic goals and the MSLO’s for the program are aligned with the CSLO’s of the College as indicated throughout this report. |

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| **Program Continuous Quality Improvement** |
| Discuss how the program has used learning outcome assessment results to improve instruction and/or student learning over the past 5 years:  The program has been engaged in a continuous quality improvement for over five years as it has prepared for, applied for, and received national accreditation. |
| Discuss how the program has used operational planning goals to achieve quality improvement over the past 5 years:  The program has used operational planning goals to determine program priorities, support the program accreditation process, and to navigate changes in program leadership. |
| Describe other ways the program has engaged in continuous quality improvement:  Maintaining national accreditation requires constant engagement in a continuous quality improvement process. |