Early Childhood Education Program Review and Analysis

Part 1: Outcomes

1. What are the student learning outcomes and institutional level outcomes (Core Four) of the Program? List each along with descriptions of the appropriate indicators of program success. Include both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Program Level SLO	Qualitative Measure (s)	Quantitative Measure (s)
Students will demonstrate an understanding of child development theory, current research, and trends in the field, and their application to responsive practice in early care setting. (I A,B,C,D, II A,C, III A,B, IV A,B,C,D)	Students participate in in-class discussions and group activities to apply child development theory to practice. Students conduct observations of children. Students conduct interviews to enrich their understanding of the developmental process.	Students complete exams to measure their knowledge. Students write research papers. Essay questions and observation papers are written to assess student's ability to translate developmental theory to classroom practice.
Students will demonstrate an understanding of the context of individual development including the centrality of family, culture, and community. Students will develop specific techniques for creating meaningful relationships between home and school. (I A,B,C,D, II A,D, III B, IV A,B,C)	Students participate in in-class discussions and group activities to understand diversity in the context of early childhood education. Students visit community agencies to learn about the various social issues affecting children and families. Students conduct interviews to learn about parent's views and culturally diverse childrearing practices.	Students do oral presentations and written work to demonstrate ways to create home-school connections. Exams and essay questions are utilized to assess understanding of contextual development. Weekly journal entries including video reflections explore students understanding of contextual development.
Students will develop curriculum and early care environments that are derived from unbiased observation and assessment of children's interests and developmental levels. (I A,B,C,D, II A,D, III B, IV A,B,C)	Students propose curriculum that is based on observation of children's interests. Students use assessment tools (DRDP-R) to gauge children's development and	Students turn in weekly curriculum plans based on observation of children's interests & developmental stage. Students write papers and complete assessments based

	propose curriculum based on findings. Student conduct environmental assessments (ECERS/ITERS/FDCRS) and propose changes to the environment to facilitate children's learning and well-being	on observations.
Students will demonstrate reflective practice in their work with young children by building awareness of self as teacher, child as learner, and early childhood pedagogy. (I A,B,C,D, II A,D, III B, IV A,B,C)	Students will reflect on how their own knowledge and experiences relate to ECE theories and practice. Reflective journal entries that demonstrate an understanding of the complex nature of teaching	Students turn in weekly reading reflections showing that they have begun integrating self-knowledge with theoretical knowledge. Students complete a self-socialization paper. Students turn in weekly journal entries.

2. The specific SCC Strategic Direction and Goal(s) supported by this program.

There are a number of strategic goals and objectives that are supported by the Early Childhood Education Program, primarily goals 1-3 and 7. Our program continually seeks to create a current, meaningful curriculum that provides students with vocational skills that will positively impact the children and families they serve. We take our role as trainers seriously; children and families deserve high quality early childhood education professionals that understand best practices in the field. We work with the college and the outside community to make the following strategic goals a reality.

Goal 1: Quality Teaching and Learning – Improving student success while maintaining academic quality

Obj. 1.1 – Enhance attainment of educational goals by students: Students come to our program with varied educational goals, ranging from obtaining units to qualify for an entry level job, to gaining an associate's degree, to transferring to a four year institution. We will refer students to college counselors and encourage them to talk with the Child Care Training Consortium advisor to learn about the process of obtaining a Child Development Permit from the Department of Teacher Credentialing. We will refer students to have foreign transcripts evaluated and make them aware of websites such as ASSIST which lists articulation agreements with four year institutions. Our syllabi also list dates and deadlines for applying for degrees. We have a book loan program at the Solano College Children's program, texts on reserve in the library, and an Early Childhood Education collection in the library. We offer courses at

nontraditional times and formats including evenings, Saturdays, and online. We also offer a few classes with Spanish translation. We administer the TANF CDC (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – Child Development Center) program which provides financial assistance (textbooks, bus fare, gas cards, etc.) and guidance to students who are on Cal-Works and pursuing their early education degrees. In our classes, we also work to meet the needs of individuals with diverse learning styles (providing a mixture of hands-on activities, discussion, lecture, multi-media, etc.) and diverse backgrounds (engaging in self-reflection, integrating cultural awareness, etc.) so that students feel represented and engaged in the learning process.

Obj. 1.2 – Improve basic skills attainment– To help students improve their basic skills, we regularly assign reading and writing assignments; we provide supportive office hours when they are in need of assistance; we refer students to the reading and writing center; and we work closely with the Disability Services Program when appropriate. We also worked with First 5 Solano and CARES to set up a cohort group of ECE students who were having difficulty passing the math requirements for their associate's degree.

Obj. 1.3 – Develop new and expand existing curricular offerings – To keep current with emerging trends in our field and to meet the needs of nontraditional students, we have developed and expanded some of our curricular offerings. For example, ECE 101: Sensitive and Critical Topics in Early Childhood Education has been offered with special topics including Baby Signs, math for ECE, and literacy for ECE. In contract with CARES, ECE 101: ITERS, ECERS, and FDCRS (Harms-Clifford Environmental Rating Scales) classes have been offered in English and with Spanish translation every semester. Human Development coursework that is part of our degree (HUDV 38) has been added in an online format. NUTR 53: Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition was developed to meet recommendations of the California Community College Early Childhood Educations (CCCECE) organization. In all of our coursework, we continually revise curriculum to meet emerging trends in our field and to improve student learning. Observations are regularly part of our coursework to help students develop the observational skills needed for appropriate and responsive caregiving.

Obj. 1.4 – Validation and improvement of student learning – Pedagogical discussions and reflective process is used by individual instructors and on a department level to assess and improve student learning. Formally, student learning objectives (SLO's) are assessed according to a rotating calendar. In two practicum classes, students get hands-on experience interacting with young children and honing their teaching skills. Coaching from the practicum instructor, Solano College Children's Program head teachers and director helps students improve their curriculum development skills, interactions skills, assessment skills, and reflective practice. At the end of practicum courses there is a celebration acknowledging student growth over the course of the semester. Each May, the ECE department holds a graduation celebration to recognize students and their family for accomplishment. Every fall, we also offer at $500 scholarship to reward and acknowledge successful ECE students who are committed to the field.

Goal 2: Student Access – Provide a college environment that attracts and supports student from our diverse community to increase enrollment and success via access and retention

Obj. 2.2 – Access and success of under-served populations – The Early Childhood Education Program is one that has long been attractive to under-served populations, as the care of children is universal across ethnic groups, and familiar to many women re-entering the workforce. In order to help make individual's successful in the program we provide underserved populations a number of support systems including the TANF CDC program, Child Development Training Consortium, work study, and financial aid. We offer classes in the evenings, on-line, and at the satellite campuses in Vacaville and Vallejo.

Obj. 2.3 – Participation rate from feeder schools – There is currently a two-plus-two articulation with Vanden High School for ECE 063. Some students from feeder schools will get to know the program before the start of school at the Early Childhood Education booth at the Solano College Preview Day.

Obj. 2.4 – Student retention and persistence – One of the ways we aim to support student retention and persistence is to make visible the institutional workings of the campus and to help students become savvier in navigating the system. We also work to be clear in our expectations and give ample feedback and support to help students develop necessary skills. We hope to instill in our classrooms a sense of community and a passion for working with children so that students will be motivated to continue their education.

Goal 3: Institutional Diversity – Foster a college environment and strong connection to the community that will attract and support a diverse and excellent faculty, staff, and student body

Obj. 3.1 – Diversity profile of college workforce and student body – Since the last program review, three new full-time faculty have been hired that significantly diversified our program make-up (racial/cultural diversity and age diversity). We have added an adjunct faculty member that increases our gender diversity as well. The student population we serve continues to be ethnically diverse, yet lacks gender diversity. We encourage and support any males who enter our program.

 Obj. 3.2 – Sensitivity to and appreciation of diversity – Because quality early childhood practice is so influenced by respect for, sensitivity to, and awareness of diversity, themes of individual difference, cultural continuity, and communication skills are regularly woven into our coursework. Faculty participates in trainings and workshops that help us increase our sensitivity and develop new techniques for bringing cultural issues into the classroom.

Goal 7: Community Relations – Foster a strong connection to the communities we serve and be responsive to local and regional needs.

Obj. 7.1 – Workforce training and economic development – Early Childhood Education is a vocational program, providing training to those interested in entering the workforce in infant-toddler, preschool, or school-age programs. Classes are designed with pragmatic information to help students become successful in the workforce. Practicum courses in quality early childhood programs are required as part of the degree so students enter the workforce with real-life experiences. In some introductory classes, students take field-trips to child care programs to learn about professional options. In later classes, they are asked to put together a professional portfolio including a resume, and to take oral quizzes which serve as practice for work place interviews. Our Child Development Training Consortium advisor helps

students obtain their Child Development Permits. In the TANF CDC program, students get support from mentors and other professionals in the field to develop workplace insight and skills.

Obj. 7.3 – Strong connection to the community – One of our program's strengths is our connection to the community. In order to provide on-going education to the childcare workforce, to make that education current and relevant to the changing needs of the community, and to advocate for the needs of children and families, our faculty and staff are very involved in the early childhood community. One faculty has served as a First 5 Commissioner, officer at SNAEYC (Solano-Napa Association of the Education of Young Children), committee member on the Children of the Incarcerated Committee, member of the Child Abuse Prevention Council, Mentor Teacher Seminar Leader, Preschool for All Solano College representative, staff to the ECE advisory board, and CPIN (California Preschool Instructional Network) educator for the Contra Costa and Solano County Region. Another serves on the board for the Children's Advocate (an advocacy publication), is facilitator of the Director Seminar Program, a facilitator for the Master Teacher Support Group in Alameda County, a trainer for the Director Mentor Institutes held statewide, and a steering committee member for BANDTEC (Bay Area Network of Diversity Trainers in Early Childhood). The Children's Program Director is co-chair of the Solano County Childcare and Development Planning Council, and is on the Childcare Resource and Referral Agency Board.

Every September Solano College, in conjunction with SNAEYC, hosts an on-campus early childhood education conference (for over 20 years!). The one day conference brings leaders in the field to our community to update professional skills. There are typically 1 to 2 keynote speakers and approximately 20 workshops attendees can choose from. Keynotes have included such professionals as Ronald Mah, Eve-Marie Arce, Deb Wilson, Betsy Haas, Bev Boss, Michael Leeman, and Lisa Murphy. We also have a yearly partnership with the Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), CARES, Children's Network, and Solano Children and Family Services to host an ECE 101 class at SCOE. A college faculty instructs the course, but materials are made available by the college partners. The HUDV 50: Child, Family, and Community course (which is part of the ECE major), requires students to visit a community organization to learn more about the agency and how it serves children and families. Each student orally reports on the agency, or has a representative come to class to present. Fliers from the organization are given to each student so they leave the class with a wealth of information about the community, and referral sources for their work with children and families.

The Solano College Children's Program provides an invaluable service to our students and campus community. The program provides childcare to an average of 175 children each year. Ninety-five percent of the children are students' children who are enrolled in the state's subsidized child care program, and five percent are children of SCC faculty or members of the neighboring community. This high quality program provides students with childcare access and peace of mind allowing them to focus on their education. The Program also serves as a laboratory for early childhood students who are conducting their practicum work (17 students each semester), and as an observation site for over 200 students who are learning about child development and early childhood education. The Solano Children's Program invests in the education and training of their staff to provide a model for the community. They participate in parent education workshops and provide community resource and referral information to parents or students as needed. They also organize a yearly holiday donation

program where the campus community comes together to purchase gifts for low-income families in the Children's Program. Each year, many SCC student families benefit.

Part II: Analysis

1. Identify and explain the trends in:

Enrollment – Our enrollment was steady and strong during the early part of this program review cycle (04-05, 05-06) with numbers ranging from 1006 to 1017 students, and FTES ranges from 85.39 to 90.61. In the middle of the cycle, our program, division and economy experienced a number of changes that we believe had an impact on enrollment patterns, bringing the enrollment numbers to 842 in 08-09 and FTES to 69.53. At the program level, we had one full-time instructor who passed away and two who retired. All three instructors were replaced, yet transitional time is required for students to familiarize themselves with new faculty and for faculty to fully understand the needs of students. Some change in rigor was also experienced as new faculty set a higher bar for student success. Our program also had a change in deans during the cycle, which had differing ideas about the number of sections to provide for students, accounting for some of the fluctuations. We also experienced some problems with Banner that resulted in students not being able to get classes they needed (ECE 71: Language and Literature was coded wrong, not allowing access to students).

In 2008-2009, our economy experienced a recession which hit Solano County particularly hard. There were many home foreclosures, an increase in unemployment, and subsequent childcare center closures. This situation meant fewer students able to pay for higher education, more needing to work instead of attending school, and some steering away from the early childhood education field. The CARES program, which offers incentives for early childhood teachers to continue their education, experienced a drop in funding and thus changed the eligibility requirements. As a consequence, fewer students had a financial incentive to continue their education. Our department, along with others, was asked to cut some sections.

Our college was also on sanctions with WASC during the 08-09 school year, leading to student concerns about whether their units would articulate with other institutions. The considerable bad press that came from the instability of rotating college administrators, in-fighting among the board, and reported financial improprieties, also could have influenced the downturn in enrollment. Taken together, we believe these factors have impacted enrollment.

Retention – Our retention rates fluctuated between 80-86% for the first 4 years of the cycle then dropped to 64% in 2008-2009. We hypothesize the reason is primarily due to stresses experienced in students' lives as a result of the economic downturn. We had students report needing to drop out to focus on work, transportation issues, pregnancy, etc. We also had a number of students lacking the basic skills required to complete college level courses, leading to lower retention rates.

Fill Rate – Our fill rates have been declining from 04-05 (98%) to 08-09 (64%). Again, we believe a part of this trend lies in the economic downturn, as we had fewer overall students in 08-09. Another factor may be new faculty working to understand the needs of the students in terms of when to offer sections. Yet,

we believe this number is artificially low, as there are some classes with low fill-rates that bring down the overall number. For example, in contract with CARES, we offer an ECE 101 1-unit course on the ECERS/FDCRS/ITERS, to meet the program requirements of CARES. There are a handful of CARES participants who take the class, yet it never fills. Further, we offered ECE 102 a class that coincides with attendance at our annual conference, and ECE 101 Baby Signs at the County Office of Education. Both of these allow for many attendees (max enrollment 60-75) yet we rarely have this many students attend. Thus, while these are important services to provide to the community, they give the misperception that our overall fill rate is low.

Other Factors – There has been a continuing discussion with counselors who place students lacking basic skills in ECE classes because they say they like children. Liking children alone is not a guarantee for success in our ECE/Human Development classes. Educational and academic skills and interest as well as persistence and time management are needed as with any other degree applicable classes.

2. How do the above trends relate to the factors and outcomes identified during the last review?

a. The cause of enrollment increases during the last program review cycle was hypothesized to be due to population growth in the county and the continued availability of jobs in the early childhood field. In our current recession with high foreclosure rates, job losses, and child development centers closing, it is logical to see a dip in enrollment.

b. Other than a sabbatical mentioned in the last program review, the past document addresses the stability of instructors as one of the probable causes of high student enrollment. During this program review cycle, there were 2 retirements and 1 death of full-time faculty, and the hiring of 3 new full-time faculty. This transitional period is likely to be the cause of some of the changes in the number of courses offered, timing and method of delivery, and other factors that influence enrollment, fill rate and retention.

Part III: Conclusions and Recommendations

1. What are the major accomplishments of the program during the past four years?

Despite a great degree of transition, the program has experienced some accomplishments during the past four years. First, we hired 3 new full-time faculty members that brought a range of experience and expertise to the department. Full-time faculty initiated regular department meetings so that decisions could be made collaboratively. We also hired a new director for the Solano College Children's Program. This position was converted to a managerial one so that the director would have the ability to oversee and evaluate the employees of the Children's Program and would have an important role in campus decision-making.

Practicum expectations for students were increased with the goal of students leaving the ECE program as truly excellent teachers. Online courses were added for non-curricular offerings (HUDV 38/50), and classes are being offered at the 2 new satellite campuses (Vacaville and Vallejo). Early in the program review cycle, new adjunct faculty were hired to support courses at alternative times, though many of

these alternative times have recently been cut. Our program continues to work outside of class-time to meet the educational needs of students and the community with the TANF CDC program, Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program, Child Development Training Consortium, and by partnering for events and workshops with the other community organizations that support children and families. We continue to host the well-attended annual Solano College Early Childhood Education conference each fall.

The Children's Programs secured funding in 2008 from the California Department of Education, Child Development Division to build a new playground for the preschool children. The creation and installation of the playground is being accomplished through collaborative partnerships with the SCC Horticulture department and a community based non-profit. The infant/toddler program at the Children's Program was also chosen by WestEd to participate in the filming of scenarios for the Preschool Learning Foundations training DVD series.

2. Based on the analysis above, are there changes needed in order to meet the program goals or to improve program effectiveness? Explain.

The first category of changes that are important in meeting program goals relate to student readiness. We have many students in our courses that lack the basic skills required to be successful in the program. We would like to see more students get writing assessments; receive writing skills support, math support, and tutoring. We would like to explore the possibility of learning communities or ECE cohort groups that move through the basic skills classes together. In an effort to create support systems for students, we would also like an Early Childhood Education meeting space that would serve as a resource and study room and small computer lab. Many other community colleges have such spaces which have facilitated learning and positive student outcomes. This space can also be used for professionals in the field who are looking to collaborate, build their skills, and keep current on their learning. In the ECE meeting room there should be dedicated space for faculty materials. Many of our courses require supplies and equipment that should be easily accessible to instructors.

The second category of changes we see as important are those related to our program's cohesiveness and our students' ability to navigate their way through the Early Childhood Education program. We would like to integrate the Early Childhood Education program and the Human Development program into one department: Child Development and Family Studies. The majority of the Human Development courses offered are requirements of the ECE program *and* the Department of Teacher Credentialing for Child Development Permits. We believe it will help students navigate our program more fluidly if coursework can be found under one heading. Currently there is no degree associated with Human Development and no Home Economics major, and thus no pressing reason for these courses to stand alone. As we create a Child Development and Family Studies Program, we would like to also start information meetings toward the end of each semester, so students can learn about the program, the Child Development Permit Matrix, transfer options, and ask any questions they might have. We would also like to create a lengthier brochure about our program that will help students navigate the major.

As we look to support ECE students toward their education and career goals, we would like to add more adjunct faculty. Sections have been cut to the point where we are only offering some courses once a year. Decreased availability of sections hinders students' ability to graduate in a timely manner. We would also like to revisit our articulation agreements with local four year institutions to ensure the courses we are offering are providing students with as many transferrable units as possible. Finally we would also like to explore new technology that would aid our online program: for example, voice-thread, virtual child, etc. In sum, we believe our program to be strong, but with additional support can continue to grow in its effectiveness.