



2016 Academic Program Review Summary

College of Education

Department of Exceptional Student Education

Part 1: Overview

A. Degree Programs by Level

Undergraduate

Exceptional Student Education (B.A. and B.A.E.) (13.1001)

BECE in Early Care & Education (shared degree with CCEI) (13.0101)

Graduate

Exceptional Student Education (M. Ed. Ed.D.) (13.1001)

B. Mission and Purpose

Mission

The mission of the Department of Exceptional Student Education is to provide leadership in our local, state, national and international communities in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Faculty and Department efforts promote research-based practices that reflect changing societal needs of people with disabilities, their families, and the professionals and organizations who work with them. This is accomplished by bringing faculty, students, and members of our various communities together to improve the quality of education for all members of an increasingly diverse, technological, inclusive, and global society.

The Department of Exceptional Student Education's mission and degree programs align with FAU's Strategic Plan for the Race to Excellence. The ESE *degree programs* connect to the Pillars that "define institutional programs focused on creating knowledge that benefits society." ESE programs most closely align with the Pillar of **Healthy Aging** by preparing educators who prepare students and adults across the aging and developmental lifespan. ESE *scholarship and grant activities* are aligned to the Platforms of **Community Engagement; Diversity; Leadership, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship**. Additionally, the Department and faculty embrace the Strategic Plan Goals of *synergy, place, quality, and strategy*. The FAU Strategic Plan for the Race to Excellence is found at:

<https://www.fau.edu/provost/files/approved.plan2015.pdf>

C. Major changes since the last program review

In the fall of 2015, the FAU College of Education became the first in Florida to receive accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the single specialized accreditor for educator preparation in the United States. Faculty underwent the new accreditation process in order to take the lead in meeting new rigorous standards. The Bachelor's degree in ESE is approved by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) as an initial teacher certification program through 2020. As such, it is reviewed annually by peer reviewed electronic Institutional Program Evaluation Plan (eIPEP) reports.

The graduate program course sequence in Applied Behavior Analysis was reviewed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) in 2009-10. Because the BACB has revised its program standards, the Department revised its coursework and re-submitted for approval during the APR. The Department was approved under the new standards in Spring 2016. Other reviews of all of the programs in the ESE

Department have occurred through the University's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) review, most recently conducted in 2013.

Faculty changes since the last Academic Program Review in 2008 show a decrease of one faculty member, from 14 in 2008 to 13 faculty, including the Department Chair, currently serving the department.

Part 2: Findings

A. Strengths

The Department of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) has many demonstrated strengths including success in securing highly competitive external funding, well-respected faculty members with national reputations, and well-regarded academic programs. It has a dedicated and hardworking faculty who are committed to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and their families in a highly diverse context. By the conventional standards of the discipline, the department is doing well – particularly in light of its modest faculty size and limited departmental resources. The Department of Exceptional Student Education is to be commended for both its accomplishments and its ambitions. We applaud the spirit in which the self-study recognizes that there are “many doors of opportunity” for faculty and students in the Department, as we also applaud the self-study’s recognition that no program can “do all things for all people.”

B. Weaknesses/Challenges

External metrics (imposed at the state level) are important but are problematic: for example, they focus on FTIC students to the exclusion of the transfer students who are a large proportion of the Department’s major. They must be considered but are far from sufficient.

At the department level, although ESE has some very promising initiatives underway, it does not seem to have a clear conceptual framework that guides or serves as the underpinnings for its academic program offerings, priorities, etc. It seems to have been adaptive rather than proactive in its development.

C. Recommendations

The College of Education Dean’s Office will consider each recommendation and the department action plan response and priorities during the formal Executive Committee retreat in July 2016.

Recommendation 1: Aligning Department activities and initiatives with the FAU strategic plan and COE priorities.

Recommendation 2: Identifying a conceptual framework and goals for the Department.

Recommendation 3: Increasing connectedness and diversity of our adjuncts.

Recommendation 4: Undergraduate advising and recruitment in ESE

Recommendation 5: Faculty participation in the BECE

Recommendation 6: Where should the BECE be housed

Recommendation 7: Should the Department pursue an initiative to convert the EdD into a PhD