

**Department of Child and Adolescent Studies
Program Performance Review**

Reviewer Report - Spring 2022

Submitted by

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Introduction

The Program Performance Review (PPR) at California State University Fullerton is designed as a reflective and interactive assessment used as an evidence-based planning tool for academic programs (UPS 410.200). The Department of Child and Adolescent Studies (CAS) submitted a written report in March 2022. A team of 2 external and 2 internal reviewers received the report and visited CSU Fullerton on March 8, 2022. During this visit the review team met with the Department Chair, undergraduate students in the major, the Associate Deans of the College of Human Health and Development, the CAS Program Assessment Team, CAS faculty, and the CAS Advising Team including staff and faculty advisors. The following report presents our analysis of the department's key strengths and our recommendations for continued growth in the areas of curriculum, faculty, assessment, and the student experience based on the information provided in the department report and during our campus visit.

Curriculum

Key Strengths

The CAS Department offers a B.S. degree in Child and Adolescent Studies with four concentrations including: (1) Early Childhood Development (CHAE), (2) Elementary School Settings (CHAD), Adolescent/Youth Development (CHAY), and Family and Community Contexts (CHAF). It is clear from conversations with current students that each of the four concentrations overlap with one another but also allow for students to choose an area of professional interest to focus on. Students seem to gain an understanding of required upper division coursework for each of the concentrations by taking an upper division elective course, CAS 300.

In addition to the four concentrations, the CAS Department has also developed two minors including (1) Child and Adolescent Development (21 units) and (2) Adolescent Development (18 units; new, 2018). This is a growth area since the department's last PPR.

It is to be commended that the CAS Department faculty have been intentional in preparing students to develop cultural competencies to better prepare them to engage in effective and

equitable practices with diverse communities. This was a major focus of the department for this PPR period. Within students' coursework and across concentrations, the CAS faculty have developed extensive opportunities for students to make significant contributions to their communities, both domestically and internationally. Within this PPR period, CAS faculty increased students' access to service learning opportunities through the creation of additional community service learning partnerships both internationally and domestically. The CAS faculty have also increased their scholarship opportunities for students to engage in international service learning opportunities. Additionally, the CAS faculty have engaged in review and revisions to course curriculum to incorporate cultural competence learning objectives across the curriculum. It should be noted that when we met with current students they were able to explain how cultural competence shows up in their courses and used examples such as cultural pluralism, anti-bias curriculum, multicultural perspectives, cultural identity, and cultural diversity lessons.

Recognizing that engaging students in research is a high impact practice, the CAS faculty have also increased opportunities for students to engage in research as part of the curriculum, offering research assistantships as elective courses across all concentrations.

The CAS faculty have also responded to the teacher shortage across California by creating a subject matter preparation pathway to meet the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential and an Integrated Teacher Education Pathway (ITEP) for Special Education Credential; a collaboration between the CAS Department and Department of Special Education within the College of Education.

Recommendations

As the CAS faculty continue to examine how to best integrate cultural competence across their curriculum it is recommended that they also examine how they are intentional in addressing where the concepts are introduced, developed, and mastered and how to best engage in a deeper examination of why the SLOs related to cultural competence were "not met". Through this examination, the CAS faculty are also encouraged to continue to examine how advocacy in practice is best integrated into their curriculum across concentrations. It is strongly recommended that the College of Human Health and Development increase resource allocations (e.g., reassigned time, professional development funding, summer salary) to this *University recognized* activity so that CAS faculty may continue these efforts and have the opportunity to increase professional development for their faculty.

As the CAS faculty examine their curriculum it is strongly recommended that they also intentionally examine the equity gaps amongst their students as they relate to the curriculum structure. It is also encouraged that as faculty engage in the assessment of their program, they review the data on DFW rates within their courses to identify areas to target for growth.

It should be noted that the CAS faculty have been very intentional in their curriculum and course design as they responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and moved to online course

offerings. The CAS faculty note that they plan to engage in an evaluation of their course offerings to optimize student access to courses in various modalities moving forward. The PPR team notes that the CAS faculty plan on reviewing their SOQs as part of this process as they believe this would help faculty better understand students' learning experiences and course effectiveness with online learning. The PPR team encourages the College of Human Health and Development to support these efforts.

It should be applauded that the CAS faculty have been very intentional and strategic in planning their response to the CA teacher shortage. It is recommended that the department continue to develop pathways for educators. The PPR team supports the CAS faculty in their continued plans to create a CSET subset waiver program to best support students and a pathway for ECE educators to earn their TK-3 credential and Child Development permit. Additionally, the PPR team encourages the CAS faculty to collaborate with departments across the University as they develop these pathways.

Lastly, it is encouraged that the department consider requiring CAS 300 for all students to better support academic advising across concentrations. This point is further discussed within Student Experiences.

Faculty

Key Strengths

The CAS faculty are a key strength of the department, presenting as a healthy and collegial community that supports its students and its tenure track and part-time teaching staff. Their scholarly work is impressive, as is their community, university, and professional service. The Center for Autism and the international study programs are just two examples of how faculty merge research, teaching, and service. Faculty have also taken multiple and time-intensive leadership roles within the college and the university.

The department has been growing its commitment to diversity, cultural "competence," and advocacy through a new SLO and the work of the "Diversity in Development" (DiD) committee. CAS faculty were recognized by the College of HHD for their Diversity, Equitable, and Inclusive Practices. The DiD committee created a website with resources for faculty, including articles, powerpoint slides, instructional activities, and sample assignments.

The department enjoyed robust hiring during this period of review, having added 8 tenure-track faculty for a total of 19. Only one professor has retired and two have taken administrative positions elsewhere in the CSU. Currently the department's distribution of T/TT faculty is 6 full professors, 5 associates, and 8 assistants. The department reported a relatively stable FTEF, with just a small drop in the average of full-time equivalents (21 from 22.45). Tenure density has increased from 49.1% in 2017 to 65.9% in 2019 and 62.5% in 2020. The department has continued to supplement the College's contribution so that assistant professors maintain a

reduced course load until they go up for tenure, and indeed, faculty indicated that the onboarding process for new faculty was supportive. Faculty conveyed that the culture of the department is highly encouraging of associate professors to proceed to full, even though time and financial support for scholarly work is not easy to obtain. Part-time faculty teach about half of the courses and efforts are made to include them in the department (e.g., they are invited to retreats and provided stipends when possible).

Faculty-student research collaboration is a significant strength of the department and indicative of faculty's commitment to students. The department developed a creative way for faculty to obtain "credits" towards course releases through supervising students' independent studies. During the review period, 127 students worked with 17 faculty on independent research and/or collaborated on publications and conference presentations. The Research Strategic Team was created to guide these efforts.

Students who were interviewed were enthusiastic about CAS faculty and the numerous opportunities for academic and professional development the department provides. They cited research and course assistantships, as well as peer advising, as some of the ways in which they had access to faculty outside the classroom. In the classroom, they reported experiencing increased competency and enjoyment even of topics they had feared or dreaded, due to the skill and encouragement of faculty. Students said faculty were "super supportive," especially during Covid, and they strongly valued the attention to students' well-being.

Recommendations

The most significant change to the department's mission was the addition of the new goal to develop student cultural competencies, and the DiD committee in particular has worked towards helping the faculty prepare to do this. The time and energy needed to facilitate faculty trainings, curate materials, and develop teaching strategies in this area is considerable. The department is encouraged to be cognizant of *cultural taxation* in this regard and is strongly encouraged to compensate DiD members for their work. The PPR team encourages the College of Human Health and Development to work with the department to create ways to compensate faculty for this work. The department noted that they may want to bring in outside facilitators and training when possible as well and it is recommended that the College financially support these efforts. Faculty indicated that they are beginning to look more deeply at syllabi and teaching methods and a next phase of this process is to foster students' practical applications of cultural competence with the communities they serve. The department indicated that it is aware of the potential for cultural taxation with regards to community service and that they will consider this in the upcoming revisions to their RTP standards. They are strongly encouraged to review their standards for service (both inside and outside of the department) and scholarship, and consider more flexibility in their criteria.

Many of the issues facing faculty depend on resources and time. Given increased needs in California for child and adolescent professionals, and in order to maintain their student-faculty ratio, the department anticipates needing to add new faculty lines within the next couple of years. The department will require support from the College for these new lines. In addition, the department reports that the 6-year graduation rate equity gap for underrepresented first time freshmen students has varied over the period of review. The department's long-term planning to address these gaps include faculty engagement in intentional curricular and pedagogical professional development in this area. It is recommended that the College support the department with this important initiative. Although the credit system to support faculty release time and faculty-student research is inventive, only three of the 13 faculty who have participated have accrued enough credit to obtain a course release. The PPR team encourages the College and the department to continue to think creatively on ways to create opportunities for faculty release time to engage students in research, a high impact practice. In addition, it is recommended that the College and department consider additional ways of supporting faculty engaged in research. Such recommendations include increasing funds for professional travel to conferences and related activities.

Program Assessment

The Department of Child and Adolescent Studies is meeting its core goal to "Enhance student learning through on-going program assessment and implementation of program improvement strategies." Pre-pandemic, the department directly assessed 1-2 student learning outcomes each year as part of its on-going comprehensive programmatic assessment to improve student learning and curricular/pedagogical practices.

Key Strengths

The department provides clear support for program assessment sustainability. It maintains a 3-person Program Assessment Committee (PAC) to oversee assessment activities. The department provides a 3 WTU release each year and the PAC faculty lead has demonstrated expertise with program assessment at the university level. The PAC is charged with assessment data collection, analysis, and reporting. There is clear collaboration between the PAC and CAS faculty. Each year the PAC shares the "Closing the Loop" report with faculty at their annual retreat where they co-create an action plan to address the goals unmet. Surveys are also administered to obtain faculty feedback. As a result of this collaboration, the department maintains a course curriculum map with clear description of where SLOs are introduced, developed, and mastered in core courses.

The department is actively working towards meeting its stated goal to "Expand access to our courses and programs to meet student demands and community needs" by developing an Exit Survey as an indirect measure of student learning outcomes. The Exit Survey provides recent graduates an opportunity to share their perceptions of the knowledge and skills developed

within the program. The 2020 Exit Survey revealed that respondents were very satisfied with the program with 70% or more rating their knowledge as “Very good” or “Good” in all areas. The Department is commended for taking a student-centered approach to the Exit Survey and including questions that tap into factors that support and hinder students’ progress toward degree completion.

Recommendations

A key strength of the program is its wide offerings of co-curricular activities and practica (described elsewhere in this report) which allow students to develop academically and professionally. To more fully evaluate the department goal to “Increase student engagement through participation in high impact practices” the PPR team recommends that the department develop additional data points to assess how these activities support practical applications of students’ knowledge of cultural competency (SLO 1d), advocacy (SLO 3c) and/or other Student Learning Outcomes.

As the department considers additional ways to determine how to improve the percentage of students that meet or exceed the criteria for success for the Student Learning Outcomes, the PPR team recommends that it revisit the curriculum in those existing courses that do not sufficiently target the SLO and perhaps embed modified assignments and/or readings that do address the learning outcome. For all core courses listed in the matrix, the review team also recommends that the department create greater clarity and make more transparent in the syllabi the alignment among the 1) student learning outcome, 2) course objectives, 3) assessment measures, and potentially 4) a connection to department goals. Course syllabi were not included in the final report and thus the committee could not gauge the degree to which this already occurs.

The department actively attempts to remain current in the field by soliciting feedback from its stakeholders. In the CAS general meeting, faculty reported that their Community Advisory Board provides input on program outcomes and insights into community needs. The department also reports that it does not have sufficient resources to evaluate post-graduation outcomes to determine whether the program is meeting the needs of the ever-changing occupational landscape. Given the time and effort required to administer post-graduation surveys, the review committee recommends that the university develop and administer an annual Year-Out Survey for the department so it may evaluate graduates’ abilities to contribute as professionals in their work with diverse children, adolescents, and families.

In their pursuit to expand the DiD committee’s work on cultural competence, the department intends to include, more systematically, equity-minded pedagogies with a specific focus on advocating for students and families from intersecting minoritized communities. The PPR team recommends that as part of this work, the department continues to revisit the SLO Curriculum Map to identify the core courses where these theories and practices will be introduced,

developed and mastered in ways that are clearly aligned with course objectives, readings, assignments and embedded assessments.

Student Experience and Support

The PPR team met with 5 current CAS students (three concentrating in Family and Community Contexts, and two concentrating in Elementary School Settings) who shared their experiences in the major and their engagement with the many co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities in the department. We also met with the advisement team (one faculty member and two staff members) who gave us additional insight into the student experience in the department. A clear takeaway from our discussion with current students is that they are highly engaged and that they feel supported by the faculty both academically and personally. Our conversations with the advising staff illuminated their great commitment to serving the students, as well as their need for more support.

Key Strengths

Students have many opportunities to engage in co-curricular activities that employ high-impact practices and serve the program mission, including its newly-adopted student learning objective to “identify and describe key components of cultural competence.” When asked about their experiences supporting building cultural competencies, students were able to articulate several ways the program supports this goal. The practicum classes emphasize building skills for optimizing the learning experiences for all students in the field setting, and internship sites also provide trainings in cultural competencies.

Internships and practicum classes were described by students as instrumental in their professional development and connection of course content to the field setting. The two required practicum classes and associated fieldwork provide students with a total of 120 hours in supervised field placements across a variety of professional settings. These opportunities provide students with valuable professional experiences and connections to the community supporting future employment opportunities. The newest section of advanced practicum focusing on behavioral intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder adds an important new professional setting to the already rich set of choices to support career development.

The international short-term study abroad programs add to the diversity of opportunities for students to take their learning into real-world settings, as well as expanding their perspectives of diverse communities. Study abroad experiences also support some students’ future goals of bilingual teaching. These opportunities have been broadened in recent (pre-pandemic) years, and an impressive \$280,000 in funding was raised to support student participation in this programming. The committee commends this work, as well as the department’s goals of expanding service learning and internship opportunities to elaborate on their goals of developing skills in advocacy, ethics, and cultural competency through short “stay/away” experiences and a new practicum section focused on after-school settings.

Peer mentoring was mentioned frequently by the students as an important part of their educational experiences. Students described how the CAS peer mentoring program helped them navigate their first-generation college student experiences. A particular strength of the peer mentoring program was the insider advice that peers could offer about additional educational opportunities, especially the availability of minors that could be achieved within the extra units in the CAS major. Professional development and sense of belonging are fostered when students move from being a first-year mentee to becoming peer advisors themselves. Students described collaborating with and finding support from peers as very fulfilling.

The department's student association CASSA (Child and Adolescent Studies Student Association) is an additional resource for students' engagement with the department. Some strengths of this program are the flexibility of the offerings, including weekend events, and the opportunities for students to take on positions of leadership. CASSA programming provides opportunities for community service and professional development as well as social interactions among students and with faculty.

Recommendations

A theme that was echoed by several different stakeholders throughout our site visit was the need for more resources and support in the area of student advisement. Despite offering extended appointment hours from 7am to 9pm, it is currently not possible for every CAS student to see an academic advisor a minimum of once per year. The advisee:advisor ratio is currently more than twice the caseload standard endorsed by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) of 300:1. Barriers to advisement are likely to fall inequitably on the students who need it the most (i.e. first generation college students, etc.) and supporting enhanced advising will be an important indicator of attention to equity and student success. Importantly, the CAS major has a 4-semester course sequence that must be taken in a timely manner in order to graduate on time. If a student is unaware of the importance of beginning this sequence, the result could be a full year delay in graduation. Thus, attention to reaching all students can address equity gaps in time to graduation. To support this critical advising need for all students, the PPR team recommends the college and department allocate additional resources to support the advisement team, either through additional faculty advisor time (WTUs), or through additional administrative support to reduce workload of the current advisors. Ideally a permanent advising location would also enhance the visibility and efficacy of the advising staff. To address inequities in access or usage of advising services, some key advising content could be explicitly integrated into core coursework, as described above. Furthermore, enhancing the peer mentoring program could be a targeted approach to addressing equity gaps and supporting first-generation students.

The department has a stated goal (DG7) to "Enhance our visibility and connectedness to alumni and the community." This appears to be a goal that is still in progress for the department, as we heard from a few sources that they are working on improving connections with alumni. In particular, there were a couple of alumni and stakeholder events that were planned for 2020

but postponed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The program assessment committee also indicated a future goal to track alumni outcomes and to seek funding from a social justice and student success grant to bring alumni back to campus to engage with students. The review committee agrees with these goals and encourages the department to seek additional support from the department and the University to engage with alumni through a well-developed, department focused alumni survey and the development of campus events with alumni. Strengthening alumni connections will support current students through networking opportunities and the potential to build ongoing relationships and sources of donations or internship opportunities.

Conclusion

Throughout this report the PPR team has had the opportunity to highlight key strengths of the Child and Adolescent Studies Department. As noted, the CAS faculty are highly collegial, collaborative, engaged, and committed to their students, scholarship, and service. The CAS department offers a degree with a clear core of rigorous and engaging courses but with flexibility to allow students to focus on an area of professional interest.

The PPR team highly commends the CAS faculty for their support of each other and their students during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time they were flexible and responsive. Students described multiple ways in which they feel supported by the faculty.

As the CAS Department continues to examine how to best integrate cultural competence across their curriculum they are encouraged to revisit their curriculum map, create greater clarity and make more transparent in the syllabi the alignment of student learning outcomes to course objectives and identify additional equity-minded pedagogies to incorporate into their courses. Additionally, it is recommended that the department continue to examine equity gaps amongst their students. The PPR team recommends that the College and department examine ways to best support these efforts, both financially and collegially.

The PPR team encourages the faculty to engage in university collaborations to address disciplinary trends and changes in state policies as they continue to respond to the CA teacher shortage.

The students we met with are engaged in faculty research, for which they can earn course credits. Undergraduate research opportunities are a high-impact practice and enable students to explore potential graduate research paths, yet typically only a small proportion of students are able to engage in these opportunities. Furthermore, although faculty have a mechanism for compensation of their time supervising research, few faculty have so far been able to earn a full course release to support these activities. The department and College may wish to consider what supports would be necessary to provide expanded access to research opportunities.

The CAS faculty has made significant efforts to strengthen its teaching and learning opportunities regarding the breadth and depth of cultural diversity (i.e., the DiD committee's work). It engages in a comprehensive assessment process. It has developed innovative ways to try to meet the advisement needs of its students and to provide students with research opportunities. It has done this while simultaneously engaging in truly impressive service and scholarly work. Although the faculty did not present concerns specifically in this area, this can be a recipe for burnout, something increasingly noted across academia. We strongly recommend that the College provide more support to the department for the DiD committee, post-graduation surveys, advisement personnel and physical space, and release time to assist with student research.