



# Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College

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## Early Childhood Education Department Program Review Executive Summary

Memo and summary to KBOCC Board of Regents  
December 12, 2022

### Introduction

In accordance with the KBOCC Academic Program Review process, this executive summary report provides a synthesis of internal evaluation and external review of the academic programs delivered by the Early Childhood Education Department. This report summarizes the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and it sets out the recommendations that have been prioritized for implementation.

Throughout the 2022 calendar year, the Early Childhood Education Department completed a self-study for the five-year review period of 2016-2021.

Sources of information in the self-study include program description, curricula, learning outcomes, faculty, instruction, and resources as well as analysis of data from various KBOCC offices (e.g., Registrar, Accounting, Assessment). A panel of four external reviewers, endorsed by the Assessment Committee, reviewed the self-study, participated in a virtual half-day meeting with KBOCC administration, ECE Department, and alumni and provided feedback and recommendations. Additional evaluation with recommendations was provided by the KBOCC Faculty Council, approved on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 (meeting minutes attached).

The Early Childhood Education Department is the third academic department to successfully complete the comprehensive review since initiation of the process at KBOCC in 2017-2018. Findings resulting from this process are described in this memo.

**Date of External Review:** September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**External Reviewers:** The primary feedback on the department's quality was provided by external reviewers, which included faculty and personnel from Bay Mills Community College, College of Menominee Nation, Baraga Area Schools, and Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Pre-Primary program.

Synthesizing these sources of information, key **strengths** and **opportunities** for the Early Childhood Education Department are summarized below.

### Strengths:

Although the resulting program review report emphasizes many opportunities for improvement, it also demonstrates the achievements of the department:

- **Mission & Relevancy:** The use of the College's mission statement to ensure culturally relevant and enriched learning experiences was evidenced throughout the self-study and external review meeting. The curriculum and course learning outcomes are targeted to the student population to be inclusive of meeting the needs of Native American early childhood children. Students have many opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to complete an associate degree in Early Childhood Education. Aside from observing in the local

childcare centers, engaging in community and/or school events such as literacy nights are helpful for students to put into practice the theory that they are learning in the classroom. Feedback from previous students agreed that curriculum was relevant to the career field.

- **Quality/Rigor:** Program learning outcomes are aligned to professional standards, NAEYC Standards. Furthermore, the program learning outcomes for both the Associate of Science Degree Program and CDA Certificate Program are highly appropriate for preparing pre-service students to teach in daycare and Head Start settings. The quality of the early childhood program is comparable, if not superior, to similar programs in other institutions. There are a wide range of developmentally appropriate courses that are designed to help pre-service teachers become strong early childhood teachers. In addition, the relationship with the local childcare centers (Ojibwa Early Learning Center and KBOCC Little Eagles) is an amazing opportunity to support KBOCC students as they pursue their education yet also provide valuable learning opportunities for KBOCC early childhood preservice/practicum students through observations and interactions with young children.
- **Transfer:** Extremely valuable that the ECE department has aligned course credit amounts to match neighboring 4-year institutions to ensure transferability. There is also an articulation agreement created with Bay Mills Community College. In addition, KBOCC is a signatory in the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) which supports transfer of general education requirements across Michigan colleges and universities.
- **Professional Development:** KBOCC's efforts to provide opportunities, time, and funding for professional development for faculty are outstanding. The commitment to ensuring faculty/adjunct faculty stay current and up to date with best practices demonstrates commitment to adjunct and faculty. It is also important to note that the early childhood program has many adjunct faculty teaching in their program due to the turnover in Department Chairs.
- **Facilities:** The physical facilities of KBOCC are beautiful and are more than sufficient for the degrees and programs offered. The dedicated ECE classroom has many resources for students and faculty to utilize and is an adequate space for teaching and learning.
- **Assessment** results and strategies for moving forward were excellent and well thought out. The results demonstrate processes capable of producing lots of data. Graduate GPA is excellent (3.49%) and demonstrates students' commitment to learning and quality of learning. Evaluation is critical to success and continued improvement and includes three different areas (self-evaluation, student course evaluation and peer evaluation). This evaluation process demonstrates the College's commitment to evaluation. The data shows consistent adjunct faculty that meet or exceed minimum credentials and are active in continued development.
- **Institutional and Community Benefit:** Past participation and community engagement with local school districts for literacy nights is critical in building bridges in the community. Relationships, partnerships, and/or alliances are strong. The program benefits the overall mission of the college, as well as positively impacting the wider community by supplying qualified students to be able to apply for early childhood education positions in the local community.
- **Culture:** Anishinaabe culture and values incorporated throughout the courses

## Opportunities for Improvement:

- **Educational/Professional Standards:** Exploration of Michigan Department of Education state standards as these are also an important part of training future teachers and something that should be considered when thinking about the transferability of students to 4-year institutions and for future consideration if KBOCC would consider offering a bachelor's degree with teaching license. The review panel did not mention the Michigan CKCC Standards; however, it should be researched. The focus the next five years should align all classes to these standards as these are best practices in the profession.
- **Advising:** Advising, and lack of strong advising, in general seemed to be of concern for students/alumni regarding responsiveness, having one assigned advisor, frequent check-ins, and a desire or increased contact/communication. The high turnover in the Department Chair position proved to have a negative effect on students and their academic experience. A revamp of the advising process is strongly recommended to ensure persistence and retention of students. Ensure that students have an academic plan to follow throughout their academic progress and to confirm degree requirements are met. Consistent course rotations are important and will ensure students are on track to complete their degrees.
- **Department Leadership:** Lack of communication between the department and adjunct faculty. There was a clear need for a new full-time Department Chair which was completed after this review period had passed.
- **CDA Certificate:** Currently no students have completed, however, it is successful at other colleges. If it is built to be a steppingstone in to associates degree then why are students that complete the degree not counted as completing the CDA certificate. This could be due to lack of advising. If no one has completed this certificate, is this program truly needed?
- **Capstone:** As is, the capstone course is not a structured course. There was a lot of student confusion about the requirements. Each of the completed capstones were comprised of different requirements. An EC professional portfolio is an industry standard; however, the course requirements need to be refined to be consistent. There are some great resources from the NAEYC with books to assist you with this one. This should be mentioned within the first two classes, so students can start to work on this process and be able to keep artifacts early.
- **Need/Teacher Pipelines:** There are extreme teacher shortages across the country and the need for highly trained teachers working with young children will only continue to grow. There is also a need for training programs in rural areas also. The program should be structured to grow a teacher pipeline. Further research into other college requirements and programming should be completed.
- **Teacher Needs:** Public school teachers are seeing more children coming into our schools with needs like never before. They are seeing more trauma in kids and special needs that require more and different instruction that can be a struggle for all. It is important to stay up to date with the needs of field and address these topics in the curriculum.

**Action Plan:** A plan for implementation is included on pp. 52-55 of the Final Report (attached) and a brief list of identified actions included below:

- Improve and continue support for academic advising, including support of Department Chair as well as exploration of support staff
- Explore MI State Educator Standards as well as MDE standards in alignment of student learning outcomes
- Explore Bachelor's Degree with licensure option(s)
- Refine CDA Certificate program

- Focus on retention of current students and/or re-enlist students who have not completed the ECE degree program
- Increase marketing and recruitment efforts
- Explore dual-enrollment and/or early college options with local high schools
- Increase communication across ECE Department and inclusion of adjunct instructors in assessment and evaluation
- Improve/redefine capstone course
- Engage in community partnerships
- Explore grant funding opportunities
- Incorporate trauma-informed teaching strategies to support young children's increasing needs

### **Conclusion**

The academic program review process was a valuable experience for the Early Childhood Education Department and was made possible with tremendous assistance from the KBOCC staff and faculty, and the grateful participation of external reviewers. The department will maintain areas of strength and continue addressing areas for opportunity over the coming 5-year cycle. For final recommendations on the future of the Early Childhood Education Department, please see the attached KBOCC Faculty Council evaluation/recommendations and Program Review Final Report.

Respectfully submitted,



Char Weingarten  
Assessment/Accreditation Coordinator

## SIGNATURE PAGE FOR COMPLETED ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW (APR)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department Chair  
  
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 President

  
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 Dean of Academic Affairs

**Department:** Early Childhood Education

**Program(s) of Study:** Associate of Science, Early Childhood Education; CDA Certificate

**Date of Review:** 10/31/2022

**Faculty Council Evaluation:**

Criteria	Rating				Comments
	Exemplary/ Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	
<b>Ability to benefit and positively impact KBOCC and the wider community</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Relationships with centers are strong, but partnerships with high schools could be strengthened to address enrollment trends; high need for qualified teachers from diverse/rural backgrounds to meet shortages and ensure high-quality, culturally-appropriate early childhood services in tribal communities.
<b>Academic Rigor</b>	<b>Exemplary/ Excellent</b>	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Alignment of learning outcomes and curricular goals to national standards and student-reported relevancy is excellent; plans are in place to explore state (MDE) standards as well
<b>Student and alumni success</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	Adequate	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	Reduce or Phase-out	Academic advising identified a significant weakness primarily due to the turnover in Depart Chair position, with impacts on student success. Improve advising through stability and support of the ECE Department Chair
<b>Faculty</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	Adequate	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	Reduce or Phase-out	Adjunct faculty are strong. Previous ECE Depart Chair did not meet minimum requirements, although was furthering education in order to do so. Ensure faculty meet the minimum credentials and/or have a development plan in place to do so.
<b>Effective Instruction</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Process is followed; ensure faculty are using information collected through evaluation to improve instruction (and documented)
<b>Facilities, Resources and Institutional Support</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Practicum & classroom facilities excellent. Enhance programs through exploration of potential external funding sources & partnerships and improvements to budgeting process.
<b>Anishinaabe Culture</b>	<b>Exemplary/ Excellent</b>	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Evidence of culture embedded in majority of curriculum; strong evidence demonstrated by the incorporation of culture and traditions in the KBOCC early learning centers.