

Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Board Meeting
10/4/2021

Members present: Deb Gass, Chloe Leary, Kim Freeman, Anne Doran

The board discussed CCV's policy of not allowing students to gain dual enrollment credits if the enrollment drops below a predetermined threshold. This is a particular concern for the students who are now enrolled in the second year of the program and are planning and needing to earn the required dual enrollment credits to move on in the Early Childhood Education pathway. While the number of second year students is low, there are many factors behind the low enrollment. Covid affected the number of first year students last year. Therefore the pool of students eligible to take the second year program has been affected. In addition, the program needed to comply with Agency of Education regulations whereby students needed to be scheduled for a year long, 120 block of time. This change presented a conflict for students who needed to take other classes. Thirdly, since the program had been cancelled and it was only brought back last year, Kim is working on building a cohort of interested students. While Kim received permission from CCV to be able to offer dual enrollment for the four students who followed through, one student dropped out due to a family crisis that was beyond her control. The remaining students are still counting on the credit and Kim and Anne have been trying to advocate for CCV to waive the minimum enrollment policy. The students are committed and the WRCC is trying to build the program. In addition, since Early Childhood Education is a critical career area, the state of Vermont is working on various initiatives including the state colleges offering free tuition to students willing to pursue an early education major. There was a lengthy discussion about the policy and how it affects the three students who are in the level 2 program. What can be done to address this with CCV? Discussed policy and whether we should instead partner with Castleton University to offer the dual enrollment credit. Castleton does not have such a rigid enrollment minimum policy. Chloe will send an email to CCV representatives advocating for CCV to exempt the minimum number policy. If we continue to run into roadblocks with CCV, the next step is to approach Castleton State to develop an agreement. The students at this point believe they are working towards dual enrollment credit.

Kim brought up the fact that with the new change in the schedule, the students are required to participate in the program for 120 minutes. As a way to encourage more students to enroll, the WRCC scheduled all first year students to meet for a block plus the 40 minute "ACE" period. This decision allowed students to meet the minimum time requirement but not interfere with their opportunity to take up to six academic classes. The sense that students are limiting their academic options by enrolling in such a big time block has presented a barrier for students enrolling in the program. However, Kim is finding there are some other issues that have arisen due to the schedule overlap with the BUHS ACE period. ACE period is used by other instructors to offer academic help sessions. Teachers will request students meet them during ACE. Counselors and other support staff also use ACE period to meet with students experiencing anxiety and other emotional issues. . This means several students are being pulled from her class to work with BUHS teachers and support staff. Kim said in many cases, the students really do need this support but it also is putting them in a bind when it comes to

meeting the program requirements. She is hoping over time, she will be able to lend the support students need as they develop stronger bonds with her and the program. There was some discussion about how to programmatically offer formal support within the context of the Early Childhood Education curriculum.

Kim shared the text books *Working with Young Children* (ECE Level one) and *Supporting Young Children with Disabilities in the Classroom* (ECE Level two). She will supplement the text books with other readings. Kim is trying to wrap her head around the different learners. She has many students with learning challenges. Anne brought up the English and Math teachers who are available to “push in” to support the curriculum in the areas of language arts and math.

Kim discussed how she is reviewing with students the different job opportunities that are available upon completion of the pathway.

Kim asked if there are programmatic things she will need to prepare the students for their future careers. Is it a benefit to students if the students have access through a subscription to an online assessment of young children. Deb asked if she teaches her students about ways to talk to parents about the assessment results. Kim said she is role playing scenarios whereby students are learning to ask the hard questions and communicating difficult things with parents.. Deb suggested each student has a membership to the National Association of the Education of Young Children. As part of the membership there is a magazine subscription and there are great articles about the work. Down the road perhaps a budget could be put together to allow students to attend the national conference.

In another programmatic area Chloe said that the Early Childhood Education profession is one where you have to face your own childhood trauma and triggers. She suggested hiring a clinical consultant. Since Kim needs to do the mandated reporter training, this consultant could both support Kim in how to present this training and be on hand to support students who might be triggered by the training. There was some discussion about the need to prep the students about triggering situations that might arise during the training. This is where having a professional counselor on hand can be very helpful. It is recommended that this be added to the Early Childhood Education budget.

Kim Freeman is wondering if it is worth the Career Center offering a Fundamentals class in the evening for potential adult early childhood professionals. While in the middle of the discussion Maribeth Cornell introduced herself as the new Career Center Adult Ed Coordinator. She said she is interested in hearing from board members about adult classes they might recommend her offering. Linda Quay also introduced her position of Coop Coordinator. She said she can help with lining up workplace experiences related to early childhood education.

Kim talked about the field work and the challenges of the program being offered at the end of the day when the children are napping. Deb wondered if there was anything she could do to entice students to enroll in the program. She talked about some paid opportunities that might encourage students to enroll and continue in the field. Kim said the pre apprenticeship program pays students. Deb said Early Education Services has “trainee” positions. The Group discussed

how the board can offer incentives to encourage enrollment. Deb offered to visit the program to discuss the opportunities at EES.

Deb and Chloe could provide the bridge for students to help them get a job at their organizations.

Meeting adjourned at 645 pm.