

# REPORT OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

## Report #F2010–3 [Amended]; December 2010

In this report the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) brings to Senate:

- its evaluation and recommendation on the Periodic Program Review of the *Bachelor of Arts, Early Childhood Education* program; and
- its evaluation and recommendation on the proposed *Certificate in Organizational Leadership* from the Chang School.

### A. Periodic Program Review- Early Childhood Education

#### Program Description

The *Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education* (BA in ECE, full- and part-time) is the only degree-level program in Canada which focuses on the development of the child ages birth to 8 years. The degree, offered by the *School of Early Childhood Education*, is one of 13 programs offered by the *Faculty of Community Services*. According to its mission statement the *School* “*emphasizes the professional preparation of students at the undergraduate and graduate levels for a wide range of careers in early childhood education, policy, and family and children’s programs and services within diverse community contexts*”.

The degree was initially offered as a *Bachelor of Applied Arts* in 1973. In 1982 a degree completion pathway was made available to graduates of ECE diploma programs from Ontario community colleges. In 2002, the program was authorized to grant a BA degree. In 2006, the *School* launched a *Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies*. In 2008, the *School* introduced a revised undergraduate curriculum which eliminated two program options (*Child and Family Option* and *Education Option*).

The *School* has a staff of 17 full-time (RFA) faculty complemented by 20 part-time (CUPE) faculty instructors. The annual first-year intake target is about 145. The intake for full-time direct entry is 45, for part-time direct entry it is about 55 and for degree completion entrants from George Brown College it is about 35. The total enrollment of all years in all variations of the program was 710 in 2008/2009 and 695 in 2009/2010.

#### The Curriculum

The program curriculum prepares students to work with children from birth to age eight in a variety of settings. Program courses link theory with field practice.

The curriculum is characterized by distinct subject “themes: Human development, curriculum, special needs, family and ethnicity, interpersonal skills, research, social policy and field placement. Each theme is explored through a series of courses which build on/complement one another. The exception is the interpersonal skills theme which consists of a single course.

In year 1 of the four-year degree, students discover how children think and develop. Year 2 students examine the interaction of heredity and environment, and its impact on physical, emotional, social, intellectual and emotional human development. Third year introduces qualitative and quantitative research methods. In years three and four, students continue to deepen their child development knowledge through coursework on cognitive development and students may choose to 'preview' potential career options through specific professional courses. As students advance in the program, their academic focus broadens from the teacher-child learning relationship to the teacher-child-family-community relationship. Students develop a conceptual and professional framework for assessing and programming for children with special needs.

The 40-course degree curriculum reflects Ryerson's tripartite structure. It provides a balance amongst professional (58-75% of course hours), professionally-related (12.6% of course hours) and liberal studies (6 courses). In the professional courses, students are provided with a balance of theory and opportunities for practical application of knowledge in order to become competent professionals. Professionally-related courses utilize interdisciplinary studies which are complimentary to the professional courses.

**Placements:** The program emphasizes theory-to-practice. Fieldwork assignments make up one-third of the students' timetable each year, for a total of about 700 hours over the degree. These placements are thematic with the focus on Early Years Settings (Y1), Special Needs Settings (Y2), Community and Elementary School Settings (Y3) and a Self-Selected Internship (Y4).

The experience in each of the years is cumulative and by graduation students have worked with children ages birth to 8 years in a wide range of settings including a laboratory school, community child care centres, early primary programs in elementary schools, in special needs settings, as well as with families and professionals in family resource settings, etc.

**Minors:** Students in the ECE Program have access to six minors: *Psychology, Public Administration, Sociology, Child and Youth Services, Disability Studies* and *Family Supports and Community Practice*. Of these, only the minors in *Family Supports and Community Practice, Psychology* and *Sociology* have significant uptake. A total of 105 students graduated with these minors between 2005 and 2008.

#### **Admission Requirements:**

*Full-time program.* Applicants require an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) with six Grade 12 U/M course credits including Grade 12 U English (ENG4U/EAE4U preferred) and one Grade 11 U/M or Grade 12 U/M Mathematics or Science course (one of MCF3M, MCR3U, MHF4U, MCV4U, MDM4U, PSE4U, SBI3U, SCH3U, SPH3U, SBI4U, SCH4U, SPH4U, SES4U, SNC3M, SNC4M). The minimum grade(s) required in the subject prerequisites (normally in the 65-70% range) are determined subject to competition. Applicants must be capable of successful completion of field education requirements which demand full day commitments in child care centres and schools with young children and have had previous experience working with children in groups.

*Part-time program, direct entry.* Grade 'B' (70 percent, 3.00 GPA) average in CAAT Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma studies or its equivalent, with proof of diploma completion. In addition, all

applicants must have completed three lower-level single-term (or equivalent) liberal studies courses at the university level with minimum 'B-' (70 percent) grades. One of these liberals must be an English course.

*Degree completion for George Brown graduates.* The Ryerson/George Brown College Degree Completion program enrolled its first cohort of students in Fall 2003. These students take the first two years of enriched study at George Brown College's Department of Early Childhood Studies. Successful students in this cohort will enter third year of the Ryerson School of Early Childhood Education.

## **The Program Review**

The review provides comprehensive information about the program and the *School*, including student data, student and graduate surveys and a comparator review. As required by Senate policy 126, it provides a statement of the consistency of the goals, learning objectives and program expectations with various academic plans and the OCAV degree-level expectations (DLEs) and the relationship of the curriculum and individual courses to the program's goals and learning objectives. The Peer Review Team<sup>1</sup> (PRT) report and the *School's* response to it provide further insight into the program.

### **Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses:**

The assessment of program strengths and weaknesses, based on the Self-Study Report and the observations and comments made by the PRT is as follows:

#### ***Strengths:***

**Content Balance-** The tripartite curriculum structure ensures that students have a fairly broad education rather than a narrow professional training. This is a strength of the ECE BA and distinguishes it from the ECE programs offered by community colleges.

**Curriculum-** The program's goals and learning objectives are appropriate and the program is strong. The thematic areas embedded in the curriculum are highly appropriate. The curriculum provides a wide breadth of courses and has a good range of practical and theoretical courses. The range of field placements is also a strength of the program. The strong links to the *Early Learning Centre* and the *Gerrard Resource Centre* provide excellent environments for faculty and students to link theory and practice.

**High-Quality Applicants/Students-** The *School* attracts a large pool of high-quality applicants. Students are articulate, well informed and thoughtful. They reflect the diversity of Toronto and are a testament to the *School's* commitment to diversity and equity.

**Preparation of Graduates-** Graduates are well prepared to enter the workforce in a wide variety of positions.

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the PRT were Drs. Nina Howe (Concordia University) and Veronica Pacini-Katchabaw (University of Victoria).

**Student Satisfaction-** Students feel a high level of satisfaction with the program as well as a sense of pride.

**Human Resources-** The full-time faculty members are dedicated, highly committed professionals and are viewed by students as being supportive. Program staff are also dedicated, committed and supportive, have a wide-ranging knowledge of the program and a strong skill set for performing their duties.

**Physical Resources-** The amount and quality of physical resources are strengths. These include two student lounges, library resources and the *Early Learning Centre* and *Gerrard Resource Centre*.

### ***Weaknesses:***

#### **Curriculum-**

a) The *School*, the PRT, student surveys and the mapping of curriculum to program and university DLEs identified issues of redundancy, currency, content, rigor and coherence.

b) Several courses are heavily oriented towards the curriculum of the early years of the public school system. This is a weakness as graduates of the BA ECE are not certifiable as Ontario teachers.

The PRT recommended that the *School* undertake “*a careful review of curriculum with a view to reducing redundancy, increasing the rigor in some areas, and ensuring more coherence across the courses in the different [program] themes*”.

**Challenges with Placements-** While placements are seen as a strength, students expressed a desire for more flexibility in the order of placements as well as clear communications about expectations from the practicum coordinator. Students also took issue with the way their concerns about placements were handled as well as the fact they are evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis rather than assigned a grade. Further, finding high-quality placements for the number of students in the program appears to be a challenge for the *School*. The reputation of the program could be in jeopardy if the program grows in number without careful attention to the practicum issues. The PRT recommended that the *School* “*carefully considers concerns and challenges regarding placements and acts accordingly*”.

**Quality of Applicants-** The *School* and PRT have concerns about a lower level of academic preparation of students entering the program via the collaborative agreement with George Brown College versus the rigorous admission process for full-time and direct entry students. The PRT recommended that the *School* develop “*a clear process for admission for George Brown College students that are [sic] comparable with admissions requirements for students in the 4-year program*”.

#### **Human Resource Challenges-**

a) There may be a disconnect between faculty teaching primarily to the undergraduate program and those more focused on the MA program. It was suggested that teaching loads be balanced between undergraduate and graduate programs and that this could be achieved in part by developing “*clear links between undergraduate and graduate programs [to ensure] continuity in terms of content and human resources*”.

b) The PRT recommended the *School* carefully consider its human and financial resources (including research capacity) before embarking on further graduate program expansion.

**Physical Resources-** Some parts of the library holdings could be strengthened: In particular, inclusive education, special education, child development and critical theory. There is also a lack of curriculum materials and children's books that students can use as resources, particularly for their placements.

## **The Curriculum Viewed Through the Lens of Degree Level Expectations (DLEs)**

The *School* undertook a full analysis of its curriculum in the context of DLEs. It used this opportunity to revisit and reframe its program graduate expectations and to map its detailed (i.e., course-level) curriculum to these program-level expectations, which in turn map to the OCAV DLEs mandated by Senate policy 126. It was instructive for the program to be able follow this process and compare its implications to the recommendations of the PRT.

### **Program Graduate Expectations:**

Graduates are expected to demonstrate:

1. The ability to integrate theoretical knowledge, conceptual understanding, professional skills, and habits of mind and attitudes appropriate to work with children and families
2. Knowledge of breadth and depth of the social sciences and interdisciplinary subjects
3. An awareness of global issues in early education and care, policy, social justice, diversity and inclusion.
4. Effective communication in professional and academic writing, advocacy and team work.
5. Innovation and leadership in the field of education, community services and health

The achievement of these DLEs is supported by 7 thematic clusters of program learning outcomes: Human development, curriculum, special needs, family and ethnicity, interpersonal skills, research, social policy. Each theme is explored through a series of courses which build on/complement one another. The exception is the interpersonal skills theme which consists of a single course.

The DLEs analysis demonstrates how the five program DLEs support the OCAV DLEs. Further, it shows how individual courses and their teaching methods/assignments support the five program goals at an introductory (I), reinforcing (R) and mastery/proficient (M/P) level of knowledge.

The DLEs analysis establishes that ECE students have sufficient opportunities through their course work to practice/demonstrate the OCAV DLEs and the program DLEs during the course of the program. It does suggest that program DLEs 3 and 5 are underrepresented. Leadership (DLE 5) might reasonably be expected to appear towards the end of the degree, but global issues (DLE 3) could be addressed more widely in the curriculum.

The analysis has also allowed the program to identify courses which are nominally upper-level but which present introductory material, a sequence of courses which fails to build beyond an introductory level, and reinforces the impression that DLE 3 is not well addressed in Y1 and Y2.

### **DLEs Analysis and Recommendations of the Peer Review Team:**

The PRT recommended that the program undertake a careful review of the curriculum with the intention of reducing redundancy, increasing rigor in some areas and ensuring more coherence across the courses in different themes. The DLEs analysis facilitates the program's responses to these concerns. These responses are detailed in the summary of the Development Plan.

### **Development Plan**

**Curriculum-** Lessons learned from the DLEs analysis, the recommendations of the PRT and suggestions from the Program Advisory Council, have led the program to submit extensive curricular changes for the 2011/2012 academic year, pending approval of this program review by Senate. These will eliminate redundancies, increase currency, coherence and academic rigor in the program.

**Quality of Students-** The *School* will revisit the memorandum of understanding with George Brown College. The goal is that the GPA of the George Brown cohort will be comparable to the 4-year and direct entry students by 2012.

**SRC and Graduate Studies-** The *School* plans to build the infrastructure to achieve a 25% increase in faculty and student SRC productivity by 2012/2013. The School also seeks to build capacity to deliver a PhD program in *Early Childhood Studies*. These initiatives will require additional faculty hires.

**Strengthen the Human Resource Complement-** In order to meet the changing needs of the *School*, the plan indicates replacement of 2 retired faculty (2011/2012), filling 3 new growth faculty positions (2010-2014), redefinition of some staff job descriptions (2009/2010), part-time clerical positions to support managers at the *Early Learning Centre* and the *Gerrard Resource Centre* (2010/2011), and an increased number of TA/GAs (2009-2012).

**Develop access to direct entry program for students from Central/Northern Ontario and from aboriginal communities-** These part-time program initiatives will be based on on-line courses in partnership with the Chang School. The plan is to have the courses in place by Fall 2014.

**Reinforce local, national and international partnerships-** These initiatives are aimed at supporting the School's activities and reputation in SRC, teaching and community service.

**Improve placement procedures and processes-** Revisions will be made to the order of placements. On-going surveys of student concerns will be implemented (e.g., an on-line field education course survey) to solicit student suggestions and student responses to attempts to address their concerns.

### **ASC Evaluation**

ASC's assessment of the BA in *Early Childhood Education* and its recommendations are as follows:

**Admission Requirements-** Given that the Self-Study Report, the PRT Report and the newly crafted program DLEs all emphasize the importance of writing opportunities for ECE students, the ASC questions whether permitting students to enter the program with notional Grade 12 English grades as low as 65% is wise. **The ASC recommends that the admission requirement be revised to a minimum of 70% in the required Grade 12 English course.** The ASC notes that the admission requirements will be exclusively grades-based in the future. The current requirement for “previous experience working with children in groups” has been dropped.

**Math and Science Content-** There are curriculum elements in the program that are designed to help graduates foster a sense of the scientific and numerate view of the world. The course CLD 317 (*Concept Development in Mathematics*) is a required course in Y4, but CLD 415 (*Concept Development in Science*) is now a Y4 elective. It is important that children be exposed to science and mathematics from an early age and this should be a program priority. **The ASC recommends that the decision to make CLD 415 (*Concept Development in Science*) an elective, rather than required, course be reconsidered.**

**George Brown College (GBC) Students-** There is evidence that GBC students who enter the program via the collaborative route have lower entry GPAs and are less successful than four-year and direct entry students. Ryerson’s *School of ECE* and GBC have had on-going discussions about this and have developed a strategy which includes: (i) revisions of the GBC admission protocols to ensure higher quality admits and (ii) teaching GBC collaborative early childhood students as separate a cohort no longer mixed in with the GBC early childhood diploma cohort. The ASC agrees that these initiatives are likely to resolve the GBC problems. Data from the 2010 admissions show an improved entry GPA for GBC students.

**Curriculum-** ASC applauds the *School of ECE* for its effective use of curriculum mapping in the context of the OCAV DLEs. The identification of exactly where redundancies and lack of rigor reside in the curriculum has allowed the program to target its efforts and resources to resolve these issues.

Along with the curriculum issues already noted, the ASC identified two additional areas of concern.

*High Core Content.* The ASC noted high “core” content in this non-accredited program (34 of 40 courses). While the *School* is committed to provide a program with balance between depth (ECE practice) and breadth, its reputation is built on the ECE content of the curriculum. Employers indicate a high level of satisfaction with graduates’ ECE practice skills as well as with their “worldliness” and maturity. **The ASC recommends that as part of its on-going analysis of curriculum, the *School* should give this tension between depth and breadth some consideration to ensure appropriate balance.**

*Internalization.* The program contains a number of child development courses which are essentially psychology courses but have CLD course codes and are taught by *School* faculty. The ASC questioned why these are not taught by the Dept. of Psychology. The *School*’s experience in the past when these courses were taught by the Dept. of Psychology was that few examples relevant to ECE were provided and there were gaps in knowledge provided in these foundation courses relative to subsequent subject courses. **The ASC recommends that the *School* revisit the question of whether it is more suitable for these child development courses to be taught by *School* faculty or by the Dept. of Psychology.**

**Placements-** Grading placements on a Pass/Fail basis creates pedagogic issues and student dissatisfaction. The *School* has indicated that the placements already have gradable components including the seminar and the *School de facto* recognizes the positive aspects of differential grading by assigning “Pass-Satisfactory” and “Pass-Outstanding” designations informally in placement reports to the students. Experiential learning must go beyond mere opportunities to practice skills; it must be critically self-reflective and allow students the opportunity to integrate knowledge and practice. **The ASC recommends that the *School* undertake a critical re-evaluation of the Pass/Fail grade systems for placements with the intention of moving towards a differentiated, possibly letter grade, system.**

The high number of placement hours in Y1 was of concern as these students have limited theoretical basis to support their practice. Y1 placements start in the winter semester, so students do in fact have some theoretical support for the placement experience. Y1 placements also have value in helping students decide if ECE is the right career for them and are necessary to facilitate student experience working with the birth to 8 year age groups over the course of their degree. Overall, the ASC concludes that Y1 placements do provide value to ECE students.

**Student Concerns-** The *School* has introduced an interactive mechanism to track and respond to student concerns about placements. Students also expressed concerns about access to careers and to career advice. The *School* notes that graduates pursue a range of post-degree activities including careers in ECE, careers in teaching and graduate school (especially social work). The *School* has also created initiatives to enhance career-path advising. The ASC applauds these efforts to address student concerns.

**Effectiveness of the School’s Curriculum Development and Review Committee-** The *School* admits it needs to take a more systematic approach to curriculum review on an on-going basis. Noting that the current program review process has provided an excellent indication of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, **the ASC recommends that the *School* adopt a systematic approach to on-going curriculum review and that it consult with the Learning and Teaching Office on the availability of tools to facilitate this.**

**Impact of Proposed Graduate Programming on the Undergraduate Programming-** The *School* is committed to developing a PhD in *Early Childhood Studies* as a long-term goal. It hopes to build the required capacity through new hires over time. If successful, the new hires will be sufficient to carry the weight of all *School* programming.

## **Follow-up Report**

In keeping with usual procedure, a follow-up report which addresses the recommendations stated in the ASC Evaluation Section is to be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Community Services and the Provost and Vice President Academic by the end of June, 2012.

## **Recommendation**

Having determined that the program review of the BA in Early Childhood Education satisfies the relevant policy and procedural requirements, the Academic Standards Committee recommends:

*That Senate approve the periodic program review of the Early Childhood Education program.*

## **B. Chang School Certificate in Organizational Leadership**

Organizational leadership and management are critical to success in business, in the voluntary sector, community services and any profession where an individual must get results through other individuals or groups. The *Certificate in Organizational Leadership* will help to develop the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of organizations of which they are members. The Certificate is also a response to changing emphasis in organizational leadership including on-going and emerging areas such as: Globalization/internationalization; baby boomer retirement; the role of technology and virtual leadership; leadership of innovation; integrity and character of leaders; return on investment; new ways of thinking about the nature of leadership and leadership development, especially collaborative models.

**Admission Requirements:** OSSD with six Grade 12 U or M credits, or equivalent; or mature student status with some experience in an organizational setting such as business, the not-for-profit sector etc. required.

**Curriculum:** The curriculum consists of:

### **Required Courses**

CMHR405      Organizational Behaviour and Interpersonal Skills

CMHR640      Leadership

### **Electives (Students select four)**

CMHR505      Organizational Behaviour 2

CMHR638      Leaders as Coaches and Mentors

CMHR650      Management of Change

CMHR700      Cross Cultural Dimensions of Organizational Behaviour

CMHR721      Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

CMHR741      Managing Interpersonal Dynamics

CMHR841      Organization Theory and Design

CMHR850      Organization Development

Each course consists of 42 course hours. No new courses are being proposed, but some modifications to CMHR638 (*Leaders as Coaches and Mentors*) are anticipated to reflect the focus on organizational leadership.

**Curriculum Delivery:** All courses will be offered both in face-to-face/in-class format and in hybrid (part on-line, part in-class) format. Many courses will also have a fully on-line (distance education) version. It is anticipated that CMHR638, CMHR741 and CMHR850 will have to be taught in a face-to-face mode as these emphasize experiential skill-development. This mixed delivery model will ensure that the curriculum provides the ability to match course delivery with differing individual adult learning styles as well as recognizing the need of adult learners for schedule flexibility.

### **Recommendation**

Having satisfied itself of the merit of this proposal, ASC recommends:

*That Senate approve the Certificate in Organizational Leadership.*

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Evans, Chair for the committee

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*ASC Members:*

Keith Alnwick, Registrar

Pamela Robinson, Urban Planning

Diane Schulman, Secretary of Academic Council (non-voting)

Jacque Gingras, Nutrition

Chris Evans, ASC Vice-Chair, Vice Provost Academic

Jacob Friedman, Mechanical & Industrial Engineering

Marsha Moshe, Arts

Noel George, Chemistry & Biology

Andrew Hunter, Philosophy

Cecile Farnum, Library

Jane Saber, Business Management

Des Glynn, Continuing Education

Tim McLaren, Information Technology Management

Andrew West, Politics & Public Administration

Alex Bal, Image Arts

Jennifer Cartwright, Business Management

Gene Allen, Journalism

