

ECEP Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Date: April 17, 2014

Attendees: Ami Bigit, Angy Stacey, Bryan Jones, Claire Bainer, Ellie Mashhour, Ingileif Hallgrimsdottir, Gretchen Stites, Kat McDivitt, Ken Jaffe, Kenneth Kuchman, LeNorman Strong, Margeret Bridges, Mary-Ann Spencer Cogan, Rebecca Tracy, Shannon Lee, Steve Hinshaw

Absent: Bob Flaharty, Dave Taggart, Cheryl Kagawa Costantini, Pamm Shaw, Sasha Leveton

1. Welcome

Next session is May 29, 2014 from 1:30 - 3:30

2. Approve Meeting Notes

Meeting notes were approved April 18, 2014 after extending review time for additional comments. No comments were received, so the notes are approved.

3. Advisory Committee Check-in

The Advisory Committee discussed progress to date and reviewed communications around the Executive Director search process, discussing lessons learned for a more effective and inclusive Advisory Committee. We have made progress in the year we have been together and also recognize the progress hasn't been as fast as we all would prefer as this work is in addition to everyone's regular full time responsibilities.

Some of the concerns raised and related discussion:

Is outsourcing of the program still being considered?

No, it isn't as the Advisory Committee is focused on how UC Berkeley can most effectively continue to operate the much valued program and in fact elevate the University's commitment to ECEP, expanded ECE research and ideally an undergraduate multidisciplinary ECE degree to support family friendly culture and the advancement of the field as proposed in the revised Vision and Mission statement.

We have missed opportunities to communicate effectively within the Advisory Committee and the Search Committee particularly on the ED search process and with various stakeholders (staff and parents) and need do a better job at communication.

If people are not feeling heard they should send an email directly to the person in charge of that activity (rather than a group) and request a response as often when an email is sent to a group the recipients think that someone else will respond

We need to be more aware of defining and following a clear decision making process.

Many were unaware that all the concerns raised by Executive Director (ED) search committee members and other stakeholders were tracked and then followed up when the ED candidate was able to come back to Campus for additional interviews by the RSSP administrators, a sub committee of the ED Search Committee. These concerns were further pursued in reference checking and site visits to Stanford run centers. Steve Hinshaw noted that the Search Committee lost members during the over 16 months process through normal turnover and did not take the time to add new members. He also noted he solicited feedback one-on-one rather than meeting formally which would have been a more desired process.

Angy Stacy suggested going forward that rather than sending group emails with questions or concerns, that concerned parties directly contact the person responsible (either LeNorman, Steve, and/or Mary-Ann depending on topic), and if they don't receive a timely response to follow up with Angy. This will ensure a clear communication path and avoid the problem of multiple recipients assuming one of the other "to" correspondents thinking someone else was responding. Additionally, she suggested that anyone feeling their voice was overlooked to contact her directly for assistance.

Lisa leaving the Advisory Committee was discussed.

She is very busy and her child is no longer in the program, so she has reasons to leave. Her departure brings up the following:

“What are the missing voices at the table?”

How do we want to replace the people who are no longer on the committee (Lisa, Bob)

It was suggested that we review all committee members desire and time availability to continue at the next meeting and have a defined succession process.

Committee Update from Margaret - The ECEP won the grant from First 5 Alameda. Margaret will send around the proposal. It lays out a series of tasks to move forward with the development of a BA in Child Development.

The grant is for \$50,000 to do the groundwork to get in place an interdisciplinary major in child development. Some of the fields represented might be psychology, education, public health, social welfare.

4. Max Diff Action Steps

The next step is to create two sub-committees:

ECEP Stability Subcommittee - 6 months

The goal of this committee is to create a 1-3 year plan to support the continued existence and financial stability of the ECE Program.

Goals:

- create a plan for full enrollment as fees and student parent subsidies (the key components of enrollment) are primary source of operating budget
- create a short term fundraising and grant plan to identify additional sources of funds
- explore operational inefficiencies that add unnecessary costs

Potential tasks:

- market analysis
- financial analysis
- outreach
- marketing
- promotion
- understand budgetary shortfalls and finding potential bridges through fundraising and grant solicitation.

Timeline: 2 hours every 2 weeks for 6 months

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ECEP Strategic Planning Subcommittee - 12 months

The goal of this committee is to create a long term plan to align the ECE Program with its mission and vision and achieve long term financial sustainability.

Goals:

- understand emerging and longer term market trends and create a plan to address them
- build a sustainable financial plan (ongoing sources of funds vs 1 time funds)
- garner campus support - understand and promote of the value of the ECEP program.

Potential tasks:

- market analysis

- understand capacity needs and sustainability options
- financial analysis
- outreach
- marketing
- promotion
- influence key decision makers across campus
- long term fundraising

Timeline: 2 hours every 2 weeks for 6 months.

These two committees would need to be linked from the start as their activities should dovetail rather than conflict or overlap.

The comments around the subcommittees included:

- the need for outside-of-the-box thinking
- considering Impact Investments (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_investing)
- examining program budgeting
- engaging University upper administration and building awareness and value of the program

Next steps:

Several people expressed an interest in one or the other subcommittees. We request that they email Kat at kmcdivitt@berkeley.edu by May 16 so we can launch the committees at the next meeting.

5. Enrollment

Ellie Mashour & Mary-Ann provided an overview on the ongoing 14-15 enrollment process to help Advisory Committee members understand the multiple complexities in the enrollment process.

Highlights include:

- Much higher return rate for continuing families than last year which is very positive
- Pre-school in general looks better than at beginning of 13-14 school year
- 1 or 2 classrooms appear impacted by perceived reputation of teachers
- Toddler classrooms filling up the fastest
- Unexpected number of infant vacancies; not previously seen as usually first slots filled and may be indicative of emerging national trend for parents to delay start of group early childhood education due to high cost (Mary-Ann provided Washington Post article and other research for reference)
- Some parents of 'wobblers' (2nd year infants less than 24 months in August) who ideally should keep their children a second year in a lower ratio classroom (1:3) for developmentally appropriate education

and care are advocating for moving prematurely to Toddler classroom with 1:4 ratio to potentially save tuition costs, have access to larger space and more play area, and/or believe their child is advanced counter to professional advice of ICRI experts.

-Student families typically do not enroll until June/July/August when they finalize their plans so vacancies at UVA not surprising or concerning.

-Program does not currently have the waitlists it has had in the past and needs to rebuild for future sustainability; however it should be noted significant progress has been made in this last year to improve the enrollment process but it will take time

Group Discussion:

Question: Are there being infant spots reserved for Student Parents? If so, how are the Student Parents being communicated with about these spots?

Answer: We are working closely with Student Parent Center and evaluating known student parents who may potentially be eligible and saving spaces at their preferred location for those likely to be eligible (the state requires income verification in August).

One challenge that they are resolving is that pregnant students are considered to have a medical disability, so they are considered full-time by UC Berkeley if they have 6 units. For funding purposes, the state does not consider them full-time if they only have 6 units.

Mary-Ann and Ellie are working with Director of Student Parent Center to see if additional units can be provided via work study. It was noted that some majors will not allow students to apply with too many units. Will providing an additional 3 units impact the ability to apply for majors? It was noted that student funding is neither straight forward or easy to resolve, which is frustrating for the students in need and the ECEP program who is required to follow State and University guidelines.

Question: Isn't it unusual to have openings in infant care?

Answer: One reason might be that because of the cost of child care more and more parents are opting not to send their kids to infant care. It may be that people think the ECEP infant spots are full and so they are not bothering to apply. Finally, there may still be some residual effects from the quality issues we had with the program last year. We're reaching out in different ways to fill infant spots.

Observation: The program has some parents who want to move their kids to a more advanced class because they want the lower rate for toddlers vs. infant costs.

Claire noted that her program also had a challenge with parents wanting to put their children in an

advanced classroom or age grouping that was inappropriate for their child's age and needs. She worked with board members who gave great feedback on how to handle this. It's important to find ways of being both flexible and developmentally appropriate. She is willing to share these ideas with Ellie and Mary-Ann which they agreed was an excellent idea.

There was a discussion around the fee structure and whether the program should carefully review both the fee structure and the classroom mix (e.g. number of infant, toddler and preschool classrooms). It was noted that this should be part of the subcommittee work on financial stability and sustainability.

Ken J suggested that in some programs they use a flat rate in order to deal with the issue of parents moving their children into a more advanced class for financial reasons. Some of the reasons to justify higher rates for older classrooms with larger ratios is that they have adjunct teachers for music and movement.

LeNorman - requests that at the next meeting we have:

- 1) What is the market rate in the region for these different groups
- 2) We owe the faculty welfare committee an update on our rates vs. what it would cost to break even on the program.

Inga suggested that we check with Bob F. as he might have this information already.

Ken J and Claire offered to serve on the short term financial committee.

6. Parent Engagement Committee

The Parent Engagement Committee has been working on a survey for parents who have been involved in the program over the last 3 years. They have targeted many different topics:

- affordability
- strengths and weaknesses
- value to campus

The survey is targeted to go out the week of April 21, 2014. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

7. Operations Update

Dwight Way Opening

The opening will be on 5/14 from 3-5 p.m. Please join us in celebrating this event!

Website

The ECEP website will be converted into Drupal, a content management system that will make it easy to update. Mary-Ann would appreciate feedback about the current website, both what you like, and what it might be missing.

Vacant Positions

Due to budget issues combined with improved management coverage from new Center Director coverage for each center, Curriculum Director position initially recommended by ICRI will not be filled this next year. ICRI has agreed the position is no longer critical with the improvements already made through the new structure and the career substitute positions. Dwight Way Center Director and vacant teacher position searches underway. Should be filled before opening in August.

Tasks

- Advisory Committee members contact Kat at kmcdivitt@berkeley.edu to sign up for a sub-committee
- Mary-Ann check in with Claire about how to work with parents who want to move their children to a class that may not be developmentally appropriate
- Mary-Ann to coordinate the acquisition of the following information:
 - 1) What is the market rate in the region for different types of early education centers
 - 2) An update on our rates vs. what it would cost to break even on the program.