SHORELINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Early Childhood Education PROGRAM REVIEW

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Executive Summary and Priority Suggestions

Overall Observations

The Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) offers two associate degrees (Early Childhood Educator and Special Education), and four ECE related certificates regulated by the state: Initial ECE, Short ECE General, Short ECE Infant/Toddler, and ECE. These four certificates are stackable and articulate to the AAAS. The program also offers a Child Advocacy Studies certificate, which is unrelated to ECE. Finally, the program has a Paraeducator AAAS on the books, but it is currently suspended as faculty await resolution on state regulations.

The Shoreline's ECE program has the distinction of being the only online ECE program in Washington State. Many students and alumni noted that this program was the only one accessible to working adults and parents. It's worth noting that there is a population of students in Shoreline's service area who choose not to attend Shoreline because there is no face-to-face option. This program review did not attempt to determine if this population was sufficient to run a face-to-face program.

Faculty in this program have been under an extraordinary amount of stress over the past decade as they were forced to adapt their program to respond to issues outside of their control. This includes: new state regulations; new City of Seattle regulations; new professional standards; and new four-year college articulation requirements. As will be described more fully below, many of these changes were contradictory. In one demoralizing case, state administrators tapped Shoreline faculty to develop a program of study in response to new regulatory standards for the Paraeducator AAAS which were then completely disregarded by the state.

All of these changes required Shoreline to move away from a central aspect of its program that made it unique and that faculty highly valued: the bilingual/bicultural ECE AAAS. This degree not only was a valuable aspect of Shoreline's program but was an important facet to serving Puget Sound's diverse and growing communities.

Priority Suggestion 1: Continue evolving curriculum and program offerings to meet state regulations and student demands.

To adapt to the new state regulations, faculty have been extensively revising the curriculum since 2010. This includes most recently creating four new stackable certificates (the State Initial ECE Certificate, the State Short ECE Certificate, the State Short ECE Certificate – Infants and Toddlers, and the State ECE Certificate). They also had to incorporate almost 50 newly standardized credits into their AAAS degrees.

While the most extensive curriculum changes are behind them, faculty agreed that additional work is necessary to complete the revisions.

Suggestions

1.1 Ensuring the 30 credits of the AAAS that the state does not standardize aligns to the transfer requirements of local ECE applied baccalaureates (especially North Seattle, Edmonds, and Pierce College). (pp. 8-9)

1.2 Map the AAAS program learning outcomes to the course learning outcomes. Faculty discussed working with Shoreline's College Institutional Assessment staff to use their process and tools and incorporating ECE's advisory committee

into this review. Faculty intend to link this mapping with the previous bullet so that the mapping and alignment with BAS are coordinated. (p. 9)

1.3 Consider launching the State ECE certificate for administrators to respond to student interest expressed in the former and current student surveys. (p. 9)

1.4 The ECE department hosts the Child Advocacy Studies certificate. Faculty in the program argue that this certificate is not related to ECE in a way that is more significant than its relationship to other programs at the college, no ECE faculty or associate faculty teach in the program, and only one of the courses required for this certificate overlap with requirements in the ECE program. Administrators should consider moving this certificate to the Criminal Justice department and removing Ms. Peace-Gladstone as an advisor. (p. 9)

Priority Suggestion 2: Administrators should prepare for imminent faculty retirements

Shoreline's two full-time faculty shared during the review that they are considering retiring in the short-term. They contain a wealth of experience and knowledge regarding this program. The program currently has one additional faculty member, an associate instructor teaching on an ad-hoc basis.

Suggestions

2.1 Administrators will need to determine whether they plan to continue this program after the current faculty retire. (p. 19)

2.2 If they have do plan to continue the program, they should consider implementing knowledge transfer strategies now, such as increasing the FTE load of associate instructors. (p. 19)

2.3 Increasing the FTE load of associate instructors would not only increase knowledge transfer, but could help delay retirements. (p. 19)

Priority Suggestion 3: Ensure website is up to date

The vast majority of prospective students find and explore professional-technical programs after a web search. During the program review we discovered that the ECE website did not highlight that this was an online only program. Because state regulations are beginning to force ECE programs into uniformity, this is a clear way to distinguish Shoreline's program.

Suggestions

3.1 Ensure the website is accurate and up to date. (p. 22)

Program Review Findings

Program Level Findings

1. Consider adding a face-to-face component. This could boost enrollment while allowing Shoreline to add an IBEST component to their program to better meet student needs. (p. 10)

2. Program enrollment increased by more than 17 percent between AY 2012 and 2017. The majority of this increase occurred when the new state certificates came online. (pp. 13-14)

3. ECE students complete certificates and degrees at a significantly higher rate than Shoreline Prof-Tech students overall. This may be attributed to the automatic conferral of certificates. (pp. 14-15)

Employment Findings

1. A high percentage of alumni and former student survey respondents indicated they were working in an occupation related to the accounting field (25 out of 43 respondents). (p. 12)

2. Until 2015, program completers gained employment at a much higher rate than leavers. The changes occurring in 2015 and later may be related to the tightening labor market. (pp. 12-13)

Student/Course Level Findings

1. This program teaches more students of color and more men than what is found in industry. This provides greatly needed diversity to the Puget Sound's ECE labor market. (p. 8)

2. The majority of current students (70 percent) are working while attending school. (p. 8)

3. ECE 132 has low enrollment. Consider offering it every other year during the summer quarter. (p. 18)

4. EDUC 202 and EDUC 210 have low enrollment but are required for one or both of the AAAS degrees. (p. 18)

5. To boost enrollment, consider adding a face-to-face or hybrid option or consider seeking additional administrative support necessary to resume offering the Early Achievers Scholarship. (p. 13)

Faculty Findings

1. Only one of the two full-time faculty fully participated in this program review (the other was dealing with personal issues). She was engaged, thoughtful, and had a good understanding of the needs of students and employers. (p. 18)

2. The faculty of this program are to be commended for successfully managing the program through almost a decade of turbulent times. (p. 18)

3. Faculty use professional development resources to stay up to date with emerging trends in the field (p. 20)

Resource Findings

1. ECE is taught fully online and faculty are pleased with online tools available to them. (p. 20)

2. The faculty member participating in the review requested a video camera for her office and associated training for its use. (p. 20)

Partnerships

1. Faculty are actively seeking new members for the ECE advisory committee to grow it from its current three. (p. 20)

2. Two members of the committee were interviewed and were engaged in the program. (p. 20-21)

3. One member is an instructor at Seattle Central College, an unusual arrangement that provides benefits to faculty but gets away from the intent of the advisory committee. (p. 21)

Program Services

1. Respondents to the student survey indicated a comparable level of satisfaction with program services relative to other program reviews. (p. 21)

2. One theme of the program services was a student desire to have assignments posted more than one week in advance of the due date. (p. 21)

Competition

1. Shoreline students reported picking the school because of both location and quality. (p. 23)

2. Shoreline's online program was noted by students and alumni to be important program components. (p. 23)

3. One current student survey respondent noted the friendliness of a secretary at Shoreline as the reason they chose the school. (p. 23)

Labor Market Opportunities

1. The CIP to SOC translation of this program links it to occupations that require a bachelor's degree at a minimum for employment. This should be remedied. (pp. 22-23)

2. The advisory committee members interviewed described a labor market with sufficient opportunities for new graduates and many incumbent workers seeking to upgrade credentials to meet new regulatory requirements. (p. 23)

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to maintain the highest quality post-secondary education and meet regulatory requirements, Shoreline Community College hired Phippen Consulting, LLC in spring of 2019 to conduct a program review of its Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program.

METHODOLOGY

Meetings

- One one-and-a-half-hour meeting with Division Dean, program co-chairs, and Institutional Review staff to identify major issues of focus.
- Two two-hour meetings with staff and faculty to discuss all aspects of their program.
- Two thirty minute interviews with two members of the ECED Advisory Committee.

Documents Reviewed

- One survey of current students (n=30, 17 percent response rate)
- One survey of alumni and former students (n=50, 8 percent response rate)
- Student demographic data
- Class cancellation and waitlists
- Student completion data
- Student completion ratios for ACCT, Shoreline, and the state
- Student grade distributions
- Comparative data on student-faculty ratios
- Comparative data on full-time to part-time faculty ratios
- Program and course level fill rates
- Labor market data
- Job openings data from EMSI
- Program level learning outcomes
- College and program website and planning guides
- Annualized FTEs, headcount, and percent of enrollment by program and by certificate/degree

Surveys

The program instituted an alumni and current student survey this year (see the separate document, "ECED Surveys" for a copy of the survey results). Surveys were distributed by Shoreline's Marketing and Communications Department using MailChimp and Survey Monkey. One email and one follow-up email were sent to both current and former students resulting in a response rate of 17 percent for current students and 8 percent for former students.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum Review

This program has gone through considerable change since 2010. Because of new and evolving regulations at the state level, the program was required to extensively modify a well-established program that included:

- Bilingual/bicultural Early Childhood Education (ECE) Associate of Applied Arts Degree (AAAS); and
- ECE/Paraeducator AAAS

The Bilingual/Bicultural ECE AAAS was the centerpiece of this program. It offered skills to early childhood educators that ensured they would be able to work with and advocate for children and families from all backgrounds, desperately needed in this rapidly diversifying state. It was also the only program of its kind in Washington State, providing a way to differentiate itself from other early childhood education programs. This degree no longer exists.

The ECE/Paraeducator AAAS was modified to become the existing ECE AAAS.

To adapt to the new state regulations, faculty have been extensively revising the curriculum since 2010. This includes creating three new stackable certificates (the State Initial ECE Certificate, the State Short ECE Certificate, the State Short ECE Certificate – Infants and Toddlers, and the State ECE Certificate). They also had to incorporate almost 50 newly standardized credits into their AAAS.

While the most extensive curriculum changes are behind them, faculty agreed that additional work is necessary to complete the revisions. This includes:

- Ensuring the 30 credits of the AAAS that the state does not standardize aligns to the transfer requirements of local ECE applied baccalaureates (especially North Seattle, Edmonds, and Pierce College).
- Map the AAAS program learning outcomes to the course learning outcomes. Faculty discussed working with Shoreline's College Institutional Assessment staff to use their process and tools and incorporating ECE's advisory committee into this review. Faculty intend to link this mapping with the previous bullet so that the mapping and alignment with BAS are coordinated.
- Consider launching the State ECE certificate for administrators to respond to student interest expressed in the former and current student surveys.

The ECE department also hosts the Child Advocacy Studies certificate. The purpose of this is certificate is to teach students how to contribute to the work of different child protection

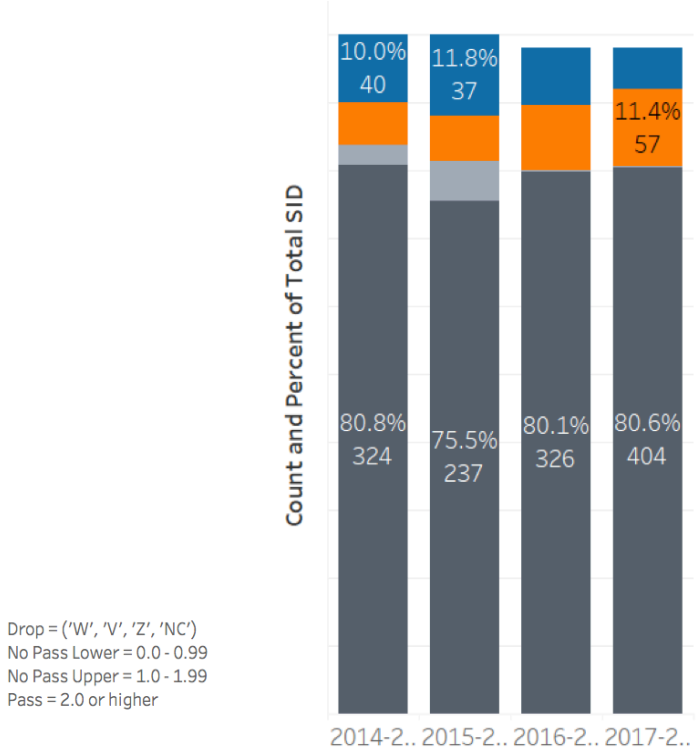
agencies. Students gain skills needed to identify child abuse and neglect, report abuse and protect children from further harm. Faculty in the program argue that this certificate is not related to ECE any more than other programs at the college. No ECE faculty or associate faculty teach in the program, and only one of the courses required for this certificate overlap with requirements in the ECE program. One of the ECE faculty, Betty Peace-Gladstone, is listed as an advisor in this program but has no expertise about the occupation or career path. Administrators should consider moving this certificate to the Criminal Justice department and removing Ms. Peace-Gladstone as an advisor.

Assessing Student Learning

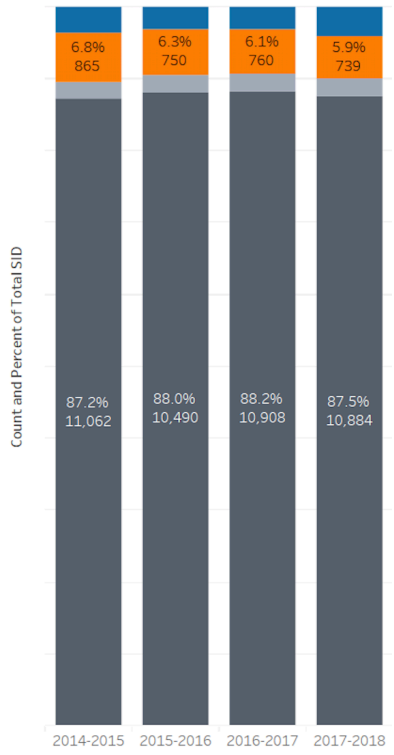
Grades

An examination of ECE course success and grades reveals that ECE pass rates and grades are slightly lower than all Shoreline Professional-Technical programs during the same time period. During the discussion regarding student learning, faculty shared that they use rubrics for their courses. The difference in grades could be occurring because of the smaller number of students in the program, relative to all Professional-Technical programs.

ECE Course Success by Academic Year



Professional-Technical Program Course Success by Academic Year

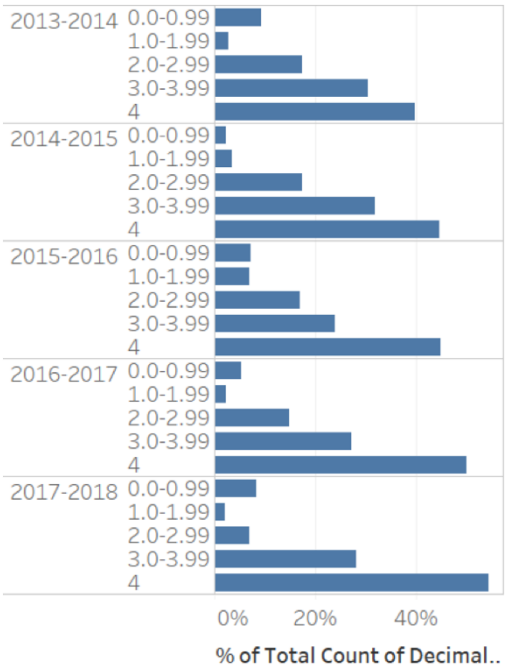


Drop = ('W', 'V', 'Z', 'NC')
No Pass Lower = 0.0 - 0.99
No Pass Upper = 1.0 - 1.99
Pass = 2.0 or higher

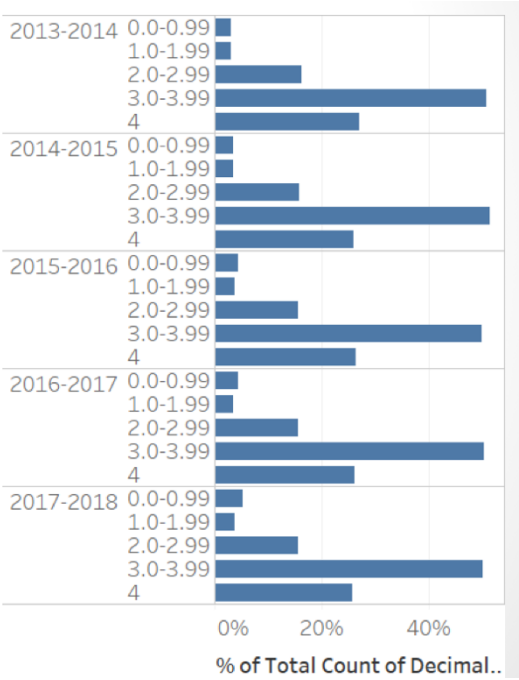
Note. Student counts fewer than 10 are not reported.

Grade distributions in the following table reveal fairly consistent and objective grading practices from year-to-year. The small amount of year-to-year variability is attributed to the relatively small numbers of students with ECE course takers.

ECE (Course Takers)



Prof-Tech



Employment Outcomes

To understand employment outcomes, two data sources are typically used. First, ECE alumni survey responses regarding their employment status is considered. Remembering that the alumni response rate was quite low (eight percent), the results reported were not generalizable.

When responding to an open-ended question about their current jobs and responsibilities, 29 out of 40 respondents indicated they were working in a occupation related to the ECE program. This is a high correlation and offers some evidence regarding the relevancy of the program and the tight accounting labor market.

The second data source is the Data Linking for Outcomes Assessment database compiled by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges linking program outcomes and employment data. This data shows the employment outcomes for alumni that completed their degree or certificate. The data does not show what jobs these individuals have.

Academic Year	Estimated Employment Rate for Completers	Estimated Employment Rate for Leavers
2012-2013	96%	66%
2013-2014	77%	76%
2014-2015	93%	63%
2015-2016	61%	100%
2016-2017	37%	61%

Until 2015, completers gained employment generally at a much higher rate than leavers. In 2015, leavers also began gaining employment at a high rate. The advisory committee and faculty indicate that this is likely because of the tightening labor market. The variance in the rates from year to year indicate this could also be because of the relatively low number of people included in the data, ranging between six and 15 individuals.

Completers –Average Wages (2012-2016)		
Completion Year	**Completers**	**Leavers**
2012-2013	$16.49	$14.79
2013-2014	$14.33	$20.36
2014-2015	$20.91	$22.08
2015-2016	$20.30	$16.19
2016-2017	$27.62	$25.73

Reported wages for this program were strong for both completers and leavers. Leavers wage strength may be attributed to the minimum wage increases as well as the tightening labor market.

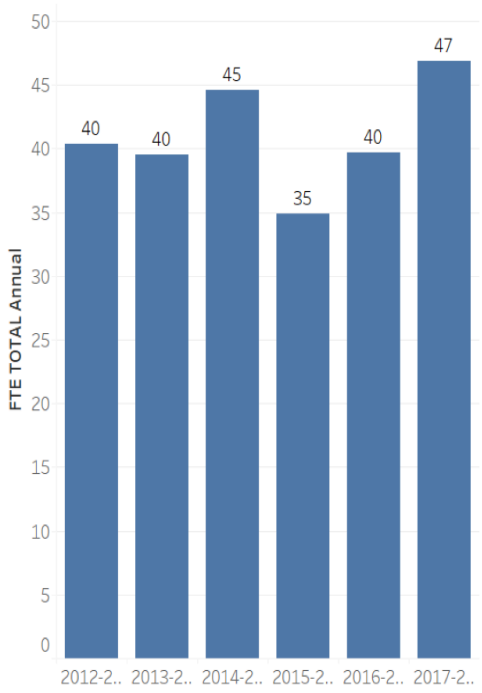
Student Data Trends

Enrollment

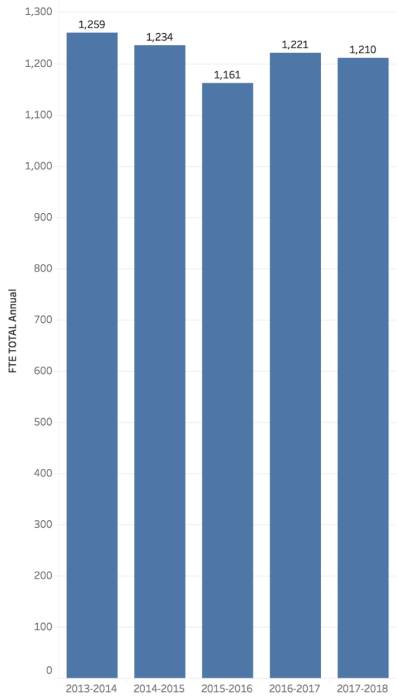
As the following table shows, ECE FTE enrollment increased by over 17 percent between AY 2012 and 2017. Note that this increase occurs around the time that the new state certificates come online. Shoreline's professional-technical programs on average decreased by 4 percent during the same time period.

FTE by Academic Year

ECED



Prof-Tech



The following table compares Shoreline ECE's FTE with other local colleges. Shoreline's program is the smallest of local colleges. This is likely attributable to Shoreline's small service area. Faculty also shared that each year they refer students seeking a face-to-face experience to other colleges. However, they also gain students each year because Shoreline's program is online only. While it's difficult to determine the degree to which having an online only program affects enrollment, it's conceivable that if sufficient demand existed, adding a face-to-face component could boost enrollment. Adding a face-to-face component would also allow Shoreline to add an IBEST component to their program, which could also expand enrollment.

One factor affecting enrollment is the Early Achievers scholarship. This state scholarship is allocated to schools based on district size – Shoreline was allocated scholarships for five FTE. Faculty noted that while the one year they offered the scholarship their enrollment jumped, the scholarship requires an administrative burden that is difficult to fulfill on the small number of scholarships allocated to Shoreline without additional administrative support.

While most programs grew steadily during the study period, it's worth noting that North Seattle College's program growth (170 percent increase in FTE) is likely attributed to launching their applied baccalaureate program during this time period. Also, the reader should note that the FTE reported below, which come from state records, are much lower than those reported above, which come from Shoreline records. The data below should be used for comparative purposes.

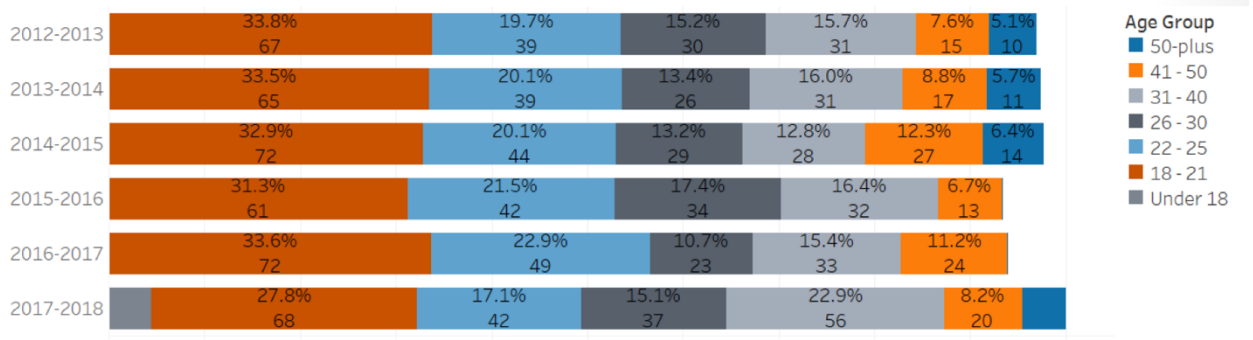
FTE Comparison by Year

	Shoreline Community College	Bellevue College	North Seattle College	Edmonds Community College	Everett College	Lake Washington Institute of Technology College	Seattle Central College
2014-15	21.4	64.8	42.4	61.4	54.0	27.8	21.6
2015-16	17.0	61.2	60.5	52.1	69.1	33.0	38.5
2016-17	27.4	57.0	107.4	56.4	73.9	43.8	57.5
2017-18	29.0	49.1	115.0	52.6	73.3	39.4	52.5

Student Demographics

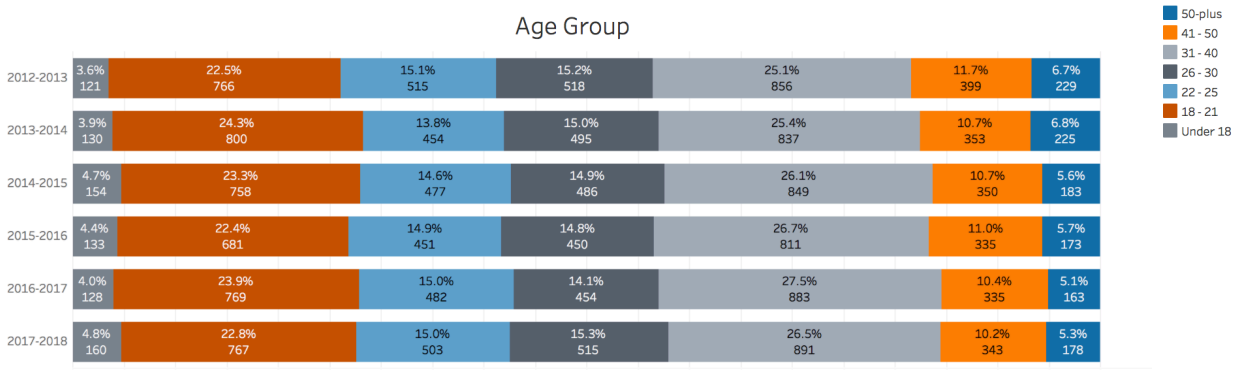
While ECE no longer offers their bi-cultural/bilingual curriculum, the program still does an excellent job of attracting a diverse student body to the program. Depending on the year, student ethnicity ranges between 39 to 50 percent non-white, compared to national industry average of 38 percent non-white.[1] Regarding gender, the program ranges from 67 to 80 percent female, compared to industry, which was 98 percent female in 2016. It does offer greater economic diversity (as measured by Pell Eligibility) than Shoreline as a whole. This program has a greater percentage of younger students than overall Professional-Technical programs on average, which is good for industry diversity as the average age is over 38 years.

ECE Age

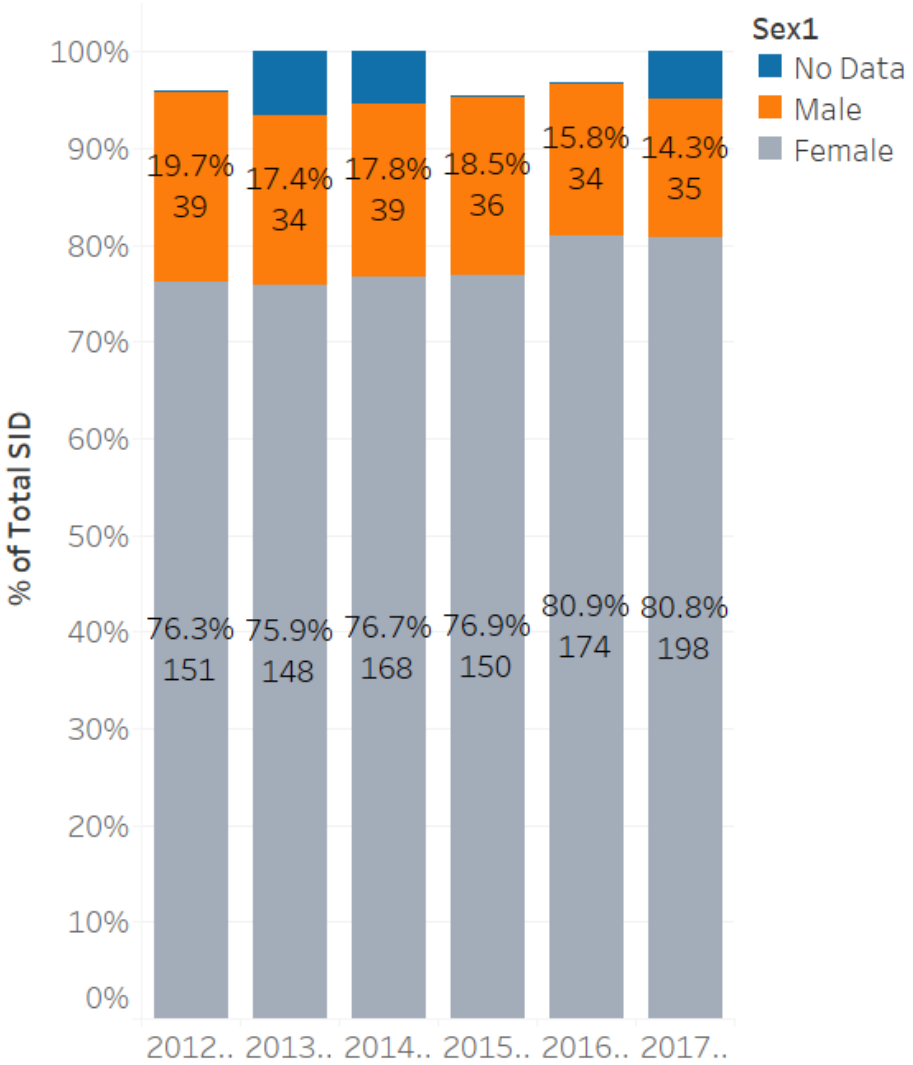


[1] Industry comparisons in this section are from https://datausa.io/profile/soc/preschool-kindergarten-teachers downloaded May 2019.

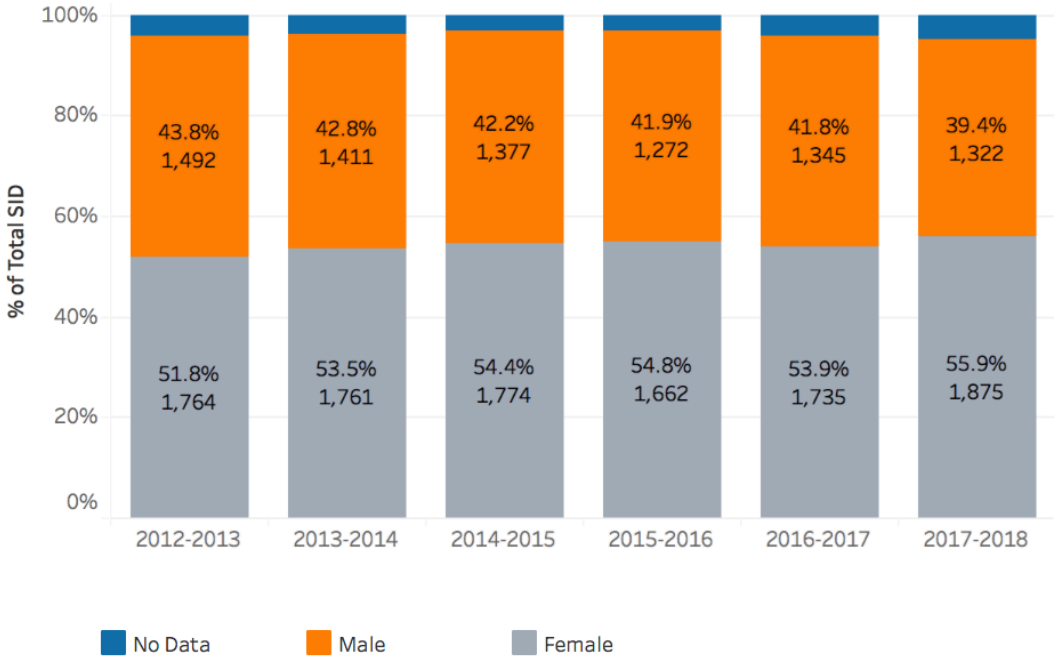
Prof-Tech Age



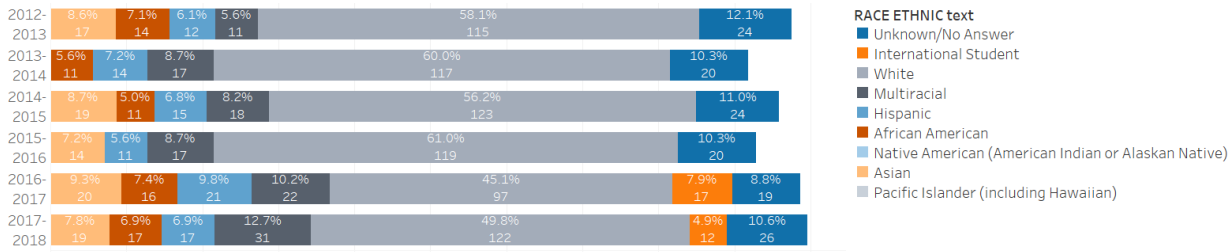
ECE Sex



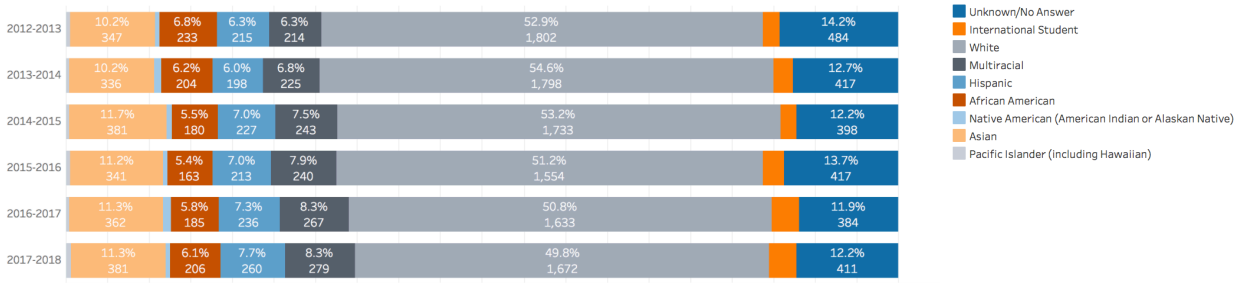
Prof-Tech Sex



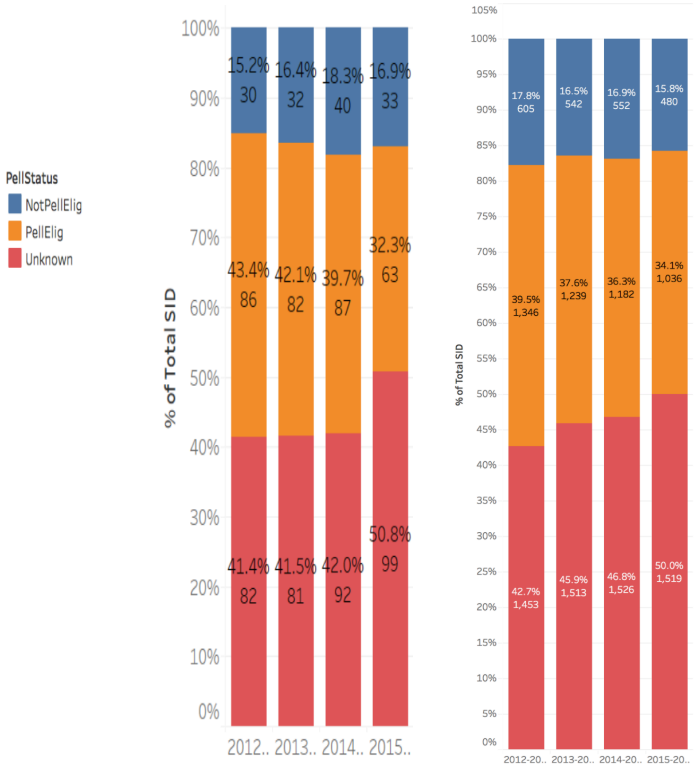
ECE Race/Ethnicity



Prof-Tech Race/Ethnicity



ACCT Pell Eligibility **Prof-Tech Pell Eligibility**



More than 70 percent of the respondents to the current student survey reported they were working while attending school. Eleven of 17 respondents indicated they were working more than 20 hours per week. This is possible because of the online nature of the program, and many students and alumni indicated that this flexibility allowed them to pursue their education while working.

Completion Data

The following table compares the ECE program's ratio of students per workforce certificates and degrees earned to Shoreline Professional-Technical students and the state as a whole. ECE students complete certificates and degrees at a high rate compared to Shoreline Professional-Technical students and statewide averages.

All Workforce Certificates and Degrees		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
State	Ratio	21%.	20%	20%	22%	20%	20%
Shoreline	*Completions*	*1.317*	*1,229*	*1,273*	*1,164*	*1,300*	*1,204.*
	Headcount	*5,203*	*4,681*	*4,205*	*4,132*	*4,862*	*5,089*
	Ratio	26%	26%	30%	28%	27%	*24%.*
ECE	*Completions*	*24*	*28*	*42*	*24*	*26*	*59*
	Headcount	*79*	*78*	*73*	*61*	*75*	*86*
	Ratio	30%	36%	58%	39%	35%	69%

The high completion rate in the ECE program can largely be attributed to the high number of certificates that are automatically conferred as students work their way through the program, as demonstrated in the following table.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Bilingual/Bicultural Ed - AAAS	2					
Early Childhood Ed/ParaEd-AAAS	6	10	12	7	6	12
Educ-Special Education - AAAS	4	2	5	3	1	3
Child Care Professional-Crt Pr	1		3		1	
Early Childhood Basics-ST Cert	11	16	22	14	5	1
State Initial ECE - CC					10	22
State Short ECE General-CC					3	16
State Early Childhood Ed Cert						5

Fill Rates

Fill rates are determined by comparing the number of students enrolled in a course during an academic year, with that course's capacity for the year. Three courses had relatively low fill rates:

- ECE 132 (Infant Toddler Care) is part of the infant toddler certificate. The course was cancelled earlier this year due to low enrollment. Faculty discussed and should consider running the course every other year in the summer quarter.
- EDUC 202 (Introduction to Education) is no longer required for the state mandated certificates or the ECE AAAS. EDUC 210 (Best Practices in Special Education) is required only for the Special Education AAAS. Also, colleges are not accepting this course for transfer credits at the rates they had in the past. Faculty were aware of the low rates for these classes. Each is offered only once per year but because they are required for the AAAS it is not possible to cancel them without removing the AAAS degree.

  Should the Paraeducator AAAS, that is currently on hold, be activated faculty anticipate that the EDUC 202 class will experience an increase in enrollment.

FACULTY

One of ECE's two full-time instructors fully participated in the program review (the other was dealing with personal issues). She was engaged, thoughtful, and had a good understanding of the needs of students and employers. ECE currently has one associate faculty with no regular teaching load serving on an as-needed basis.

The faculty of this program are to be commended for successfully managing the program through turbulent times. These days, to claim an industry or field is rapidly evolving is a bit cliché. All industries are rapidly evolving as they incorporate new technologies and respond to emerging trends.

What distinguishes Early Childhood Education from other fields is the rapidly expanding and evolving state and local regulatory frameworks driving early childhood education, coupled with the evolving norms in the profession. In 20 years of experience in the workforce development field, this evaluator has not seen educators have to react

to these external and, in some cases, contradictory pressures. It is an extraordinary moment. The changes they have had to respond to include:

- In the mid-90's the national accrediting body for early childhood education (the National Association for the Education of Young Children) began requiring early childhood education teachers to have or gain a baccalaureate degree.

- In 2010 the State of Washington began regulating college early childhood education curriculum. These regulations required an extensive change of Shoreline's early childhood education curriculum, including removing the bicultural/bilingual AAAS degree.

  These regulations also required Shoreline to move from five-credit courses to three-credit courses. This change in credit load, while beneficial to students, requires faculty to teach an extra class to maintain a full-teaching load at Shoreline and limits the amount of time they used to have for program management.

  This change also adds barriers that prevent graduates from articulating to university-based baccalaureate-degree granting programs. Curriculum changes required by the new regulations move the ECE and Special Education AAAS degrees towards a terminal status, or at best, an applied baccalaureate. This is unfortunate as many previous graduates have used the AAAS and early childhood education experience as a launchpad into elementary education. Because of the well documented staff shortages in elementary education, especially people of color in elementary education, these changes will be felt for a long time.

- Many colleges and universities offering education degrees have begun limiting the transferability of the ECE/EDUC courses offered by community colleges, creating yet another barrier to students wishing to articulate to a four-year school and further exacerbating teaching shortages.

- At about the same time, the City of Seattle began offering subsidized pre-school to providers offering early childhood education meeting certain curriculum and employment standards.

Faculty Workload

ECE student-to-faculty ratio demonstrates the efficiency one expects from an online program. However, given the administrative demands on this program and the desire faculty have expressed to retire in the near future, Shoreline should consider making staffing changes that will allow it to transition to new leadership in the near future. For example, increasing the teaching load of associate faculty could help promote knowledge transfer in the program and could also help delay full retirements by providing additional support to existing faculty.

Year	ECE	PROFTECH
AY 2013	1:20	1:13
AY 2014	1:22	1:13
AY 2015	1:16	1:12
AY 2016	1:15	1:13
AY 2017	1:21	1:13

Professional Development

Faculty use professional development to keep up to date with emerging trends in the early childhood education field. For example, the faculty that participated in this review shared that she has been pursuing research regarding how to educate and care for children coming from traumatic backgrounds, with an eye towards helping children coming from homes affected by the opioid crisis.

This faculty member is also using the Shoreline professional development opportunities to boost her online teaching skills and developing new techniques to make her content more accessible.

RESOURCES

The program is taught online. Faculty are quite pleased with the online tools available to them and felt competent in their use.

Faculty are also happy to have the parent-child center on campus and be able to use this as an experiential learning site.

The faculty member participating in the review noted that she could use a video camera in her office to help her conduct Zoom meetings with colleagues, FaceTiming with students, and for creating supplemental instructional videos. She also indicated a desire to have training to help her with the instructional videos.

PARTNERSHIPS

Active Partners

The ECE advisory committee was unable to meet during this program review. Faculty report that they had unexpected attrition off their committee and are currently recruiting to grow the group from three currently to five. Current members represent some diversity in the industry. One member is a faculty-member at Seattle Central College – an unusual arrangement for an advisory committee. While having a colleague on the advisory committee helps faculty, this person cannot really fulfill the intent of the advisory committee. For example, during the interview for this program review she was unable to answer questions about the labor market. While the committee is undersubscribed it does not make

sense to remove her, however if the committee ever gets to a point where it has a full slate of members Shoreline may consider making a change.

To replace the typical meeting phone interviews were solicited amongst current members and two were conducted. Both were engaged in the program and confirmed faculty statements regarding the transformation occurring throughout the industry. They both described a healthy labor market with plenty of openings for qualified individuals. They both noted that the online component of Shoreline's program is a strength and wondered if offering a hybrid structure would strengthen the appeal. As one member noted, "people working in early childhood education like learning theory online but like sharing what they're doing with other people."

Another committee member noted how Shoreline's ECE program prepares people for working in the field, calling out specifically their internship requirements. She stated that other "programs are focused on best-practices in a lab setting. Shoreline focuses on both reality-based practice and best-practices. So that when students go to work, they are more successful, stay in the field longer, go on to further their education, and move up in the field to become program directors."

Program Services

Current students were surveyed regarding their opinions of ECE program services. They were asked to rate each component on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The ratings were:

Element	Rating
Helpful program information on college website and printed materials	4.11
Effective curriculum structure: (Did the sequence of courses make sense? Did the skills you learned in one class transfer to the next class?)	4.50
Support of individual learning needs	4.19
Adequate preparation for employment (knowledge and skills for the field)	4.33
Adequate guidance for career planning	4.06
Adequate program resources (information technology, equipment, space, supplies)	4.09
Class schedules meet student needs	4.38
Academic advising meets student needs	4.26
Effectiveness of other support services (tutoring, financial aid, counseling etc.)	4.10

The ratings for ECE program elements were in line with other programs at Shoreline. Open responses to the ratings identified a desire to have assignments posted more than one week in advance so that they can plan for them while managing work and personal commitments.

COMPETITION

Both current and former students responding to the surveys indicated that they selected Shoreline because of the location and quality of the school (as opposed to other factors such as reputation, cost, or a recommendation). That quality rose to a significant level in the survey is notable as in most professional-technical programs students choose Shoreline typically for its location. Survey respondents also noted that Shoreline's online offerings were a determining factor as well.

One comment reinforced the importance of having friendly, helpful frontline staff. This student shared:

> *When I first called Shoreline to … talk about enrolling I was not really expecting much. I was already enrolled at a different community college and was hating my experience there. The staff were unhelpful and rude, and the professors were uncaring, so I just thought that was what college was like. However, the first phone call with the one of the receptionists at Shoreline was so refreshing, pleasant, and helpful that I decided to enroll and move to Seattle. So the answer to this question [Why did you choose Shoreline?] would be the receptionist.*

A comparative analysis of other school websites was conducted as a component of this program review. Because of the new state standards, ECE programs are quite similar across the state. Shoreline was the only school in Puget Sound that offered a fully online degree. Unfortunately, this is not clearly indicated on the ECE website. Because most students found Shoreline because of a web search, it is important to clearly state this distinctive advantage to the program.

Current students were asked what other programs they considered before selecting Shoreline and their responses indicated that Shoreline competes with many different university and college programs in Washington and across the country including:

- North Seattle College;
- Edmonds Community College;
- Seattle Central College;
- Portland State University;
- Western Oregon University;
- Oregon State University;
- University of Alaska at Anchorage; and
- Bellevue College.

LABOR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

The following chart portrays the labor market for this program, based on data available from the State of Washington.

	OCCUPATION		DEMAND STATUS (WA)	
PROGRAM CERTIFICATE OR DEGREE	**SOC**	**SOCTITLE**	**King County**	**Snohomish County**
ECE/Paraeducator (AAAS) State ECE Certificate (CP) State Short ECE Certificate - General (CC) State Short ECE Certificate - Infant Toddler Care (CC) State Initial ECE Certificate (ST)	25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	DEMAND	na
	25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education	DEMAND	na
Special Education (AAAS)	NO MATCH	NO MATCH - reporting data for 25.2050 - Special Education Teachers (25.2051, 25.2052, 25.2053, 25.2054 combined)	na	na
	25-2051	Special Education Teachers, Preschool	BALANCED	BALANCED
	25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	DEMAND	na
	25-2053	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	BALANCED	BALANCED
	25-2054	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	DEMAND	BALANCED

Perhaps reflecting outdated pathways, the current labor market data links ECE programs with a few inappropriate occupations, namely those referring to Kindergarten, middle school, or secondary school (highlighted in red above). All of these occupations require a baccalaureate degree at minimum and the links should be removed.

Advisory committee members interviewed for this study described a robust labor market with many teaching opportunities for entry-level candidates with the right credentials. They also noted that because of the regulatory changes, there were many incumbent workers actively updating their credentials. It is likely that Shoreline's online program is benefitting from this activity. However, it is also worth noting that eventually those in the workforce will have gained the credentials required and this activity will subside to some degree.