

# Cal State Fullerton

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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To: Dean Kirtman

From: Dr. Ioakim Boutakidis, Chair Department of Educational Leadership

Dr. Lissa Ramirez Stapleton (MSHE Coordinator)

Dr. Carol Lundberg (prior MSHE Coordinator, faculty)

Subject: MSHE PPR External Report

Date: February 27, 2025

We are grateful for the review of our program, as it offers direction as we move forward. We would like to specifically thank the members of the External Review committee, Drs. Natasha Croom (Clemson University), Jason Laker (CSU San Jose), and Antoinette Linton (CSU Fullerton) for their significant service to our program and their deliberations in generating the external review report.

Below is our response to the report, organized around four topic areas.

Feedback	External Review Team's Recommendations	MSHE's Dept. Chair Response
<b>Actionable Feedback</b>	The reviewers suggest integrating third-wave student development theories more thoroughly into coursework.	This can be a focus as we do a curriculum audit to assess the extent to which our course readings are inclusive of Black and Indigenous topics, histories, and scholars. The student development course is currently being redeveloped to address some of these issues.
	The review suggests evaluating the Maywood Project and ensure the new service-learning program in its place is accessible in terms of workload demands.	Dr. Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton, our current Program Coordinator is taking the lead on this. It is also important to point out that the next Maywood experience will be significantly different than past ones and will be no longer led by our department nor hosted on our campus. The changes that are already in process may address some of these concerns. The program acknowledges that fieldwork opportunities must be in compliance with UPS policies, and that this is begin addressed.

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	The reviewers suggest greater faculty collaboration and administrative support to make the coordinator role more sustainable.	We agree with this important recommendation. To implement it, we must have ongoing conversation about how the team can handle some responsibilities. The MSHE program has multiple co-curricular elements (HELO student organization, graduate assistantships, fieldwork placements, two-day retreat, conference requirements) that require faculty labor, and all three full-time faculty carry elements of this service already. Furthermore, it is important to note that the program coordinator does receive a full course (3 unit) release for this service.
	A course on helping skills is noted as lacking in the MSHE curriculum. The reviewers suggest adding a course,	but our understanding is that COE master's degrees cannot exceed 30 units. If not, we will consider curricular restructuring to include helping skills.
	The review team suggests adding three more full-time faculty.	In general, the program is always open to increasing our tenure/tenure-track lines, but this is done in consultation with the Dean's office and campus budgets. We are also cognizant of the fact that other programs within the department have lower tenure/tenure-track density than MSHE and may be priorities for faculty lines. However, we certainly would not pass by an opportunity to add to MSHE's faculty ranks. More immediately, the program could certainly use part-time faculty help during periods of peak demands, e.g., grading of comprehensive exams.
	The review team noted that students commented on lack of understanding how assessments are used within the department.	We agree that a coordinated assessment program, including sharing results and actions taken, is necessary. This is an area of needed improvement and will be further examined and discussed by MSHE faculty going forward.
	The review suggests increasing the degree to 36 units.	We would also like to extend to 36 units, but our understanding is that all COE master's degrees must be 30 units, therefore this is something that appears to be beyond our ability to change.
	The review team agreed with the program's self-study goals regarding the overdue necessity for revised program branding, marketing, and	The program requires support at the college and university levels for these things to happen, and particularly so for website redesign given that all departments in COE



	most critically for a redesigned website.	are in the queue for website redesigns managed by campus IT. We hope that this happens sooner rather than later as our program website is often the first thing prospective students access when deciding where to apply.
	The review team noted some feedback from part-time faculty regarding the timeliness with which they are notified of semester course assignments.	While it is true that some part-time faculty are notified later than we might like, it is also true that we must abide by collective bargaining agreements to offer courses to part-time faculty based on their entitlements and therefore there are times when the program coordinator and chair must wait for faculty members to reject an assignment or offer of work before moving to those next in line. Even earlier, we often have delays in the responses by full-time faculty to confirm their assignments or make requests for changes.
<b>Feedback Based on Incomplete Information</b>	In three places, reviewers' comment on the need to introduce theory earlier so students are better prepared for their research projects in the second year.	However, there are no research projects in the second year. Another confusion is the reviewers' comment that reorganizing the courses could address this problem. However, our program reorganization moved theory later in the program, not earlier. To address this, we need clarity on what research projects students were referencing in year two. More generally, the notion of integrating more research into the curriculum would need to be further discussed and would require significant changes to the course sequence. Given what appears to be the limited source of student feedback that the reviewer's relied upon to raise this issue, we are hesitant to pursue major changes such as this without considerably more investigation.
	The review references the financial burden of requiring conference attendance and suggests the program consider providing more funding opportunities.	However, there are funds that go unused every year because students don't apply for them. Twice this semester students from the Education Inter-Club Council (EICC) have made announcements in class about funding for conferences. Every year, the EICC has funds leftover because students do not request them. Students are eligible for \$500 to attend a conference and \$750 if they are presenting at a conference. Students are required to attend one regional



		<p>conference and another conference of their choice. Both can be local, so this funding should be adequate to cover expenses. We acknowledge that an area of improvement we can make is to provide more information about extra costs, including conference membership and conference fees, during the information sessions and orientation. We will work with our Admissions &amp; Academic Advisor to that end.</p>
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**Limits of the Report**

The report does not address any of the numeric data. This is unfortunate because our numbers show a graduation rate averaging 89% over the last six years, an increase in student enrollment beginning in Fall 2019, and a consistently high graduation rate when the size of the cohort increased. All comments are based on a focus group with students, a focus group with alumni, and interviews with faculty, which are important and informative, but which must also be placed within the context of the quantitative measures of student success.

**For Further Discussion**

There are lots of comments about preparation for research, but none of our five learning domains are about research. Our course learning outcomes are mapped to the five learning domains, as shown in the curriculum map. Assignments are aligned to course outcomes. If research is a goal, then we would need to add it to the learning domains, but that decision would have to emerge from within the MSHE faculty.