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To: Dr. Kim Case, SPED Chair, and Dr. Adrian Jung, Program Coordinator

From: Dr. Lisa Kirtman, Dean, College of Education

Subject: SPED PPR External Report

Date: March 14, 2025

Thank you for your time and effort in completing the PPR for your program. Program Performance Review is a valuable process to provide a better understanding of the program and an opportunity for continuous improvement. I would like to thank the members of external and internal PPR committees for their exhaustive work in identifying the program's strength and areas of possible growth.

In what follows, I will address the items listed in the MS SPED PPR external report.

Thank you again and look forward to following up with you on this report.

External Review Team's Recommendations	SPED Chair's Response	Dean's Response
I. Program Mission/Goals Recommendations: Overall, the documented mission statement and supporting goals demonstrate a strong dedication to focus on Just, Equitable, and Inclusive Education (JEIE) in the field of special education. One recommendation is to add the explanation of <i>ableism</i> , where the graduate students in the program are expected to contend with the intersectional oppression that individuals lying in the	Addressing the intersectional oppression that individuals may face within special education is critical for fostering a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers that exist, and it will strengthen our commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment. We will ensure that this concept is integrated into the program, providing students with the necessary tools to challenge and dismantle ableism in their future work.	I appreciate this recommendation and response. Beyond ableism, how will JEIE be integrated? What other intersectionality will be considered? I like the idea of a communication plan but to what end? What is the outcome you are hoping for? What is the program impact?



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<p>systems of special education may confront.</p> <p>Also, it is recommended to develop a communication plan to inform faculty, students, and community partners—about the program's mission, goals, and any recent changes. Include regular meetings or informational sessions to ensure everyone is aligned and informed.</p>	<p>Regarding the communication plan, a comprehensive strategy to inform faculty, students, and community partners about the program's mission, goals, and any changes will help foster transparency and collective engagement. We will explore options for regular meetings or informational sessions, ensuring everyone is well-informed and invested in the program's progress. This approach will help create a cohesive community working towards our shared goals of Just, Equitable, and Inclusive Education.</p>	
<p>II. Program Description & Analysis</p> <p>Recommendations: There has been a significant drop in enrollment, particularly since the 2022–23 school year. Given that the number of applications has remained relatively stable, has it coincided with the separation of the induction program from the master's program? Intuitively, considering the national teacher shortage crisis, this trend isn't entirely surprising. However, it's worth having a faculty-wide discussion to explore this further.</p> <p>It seems that the program's recruitment is tightly knitted with the teaching credential programs available at CSUF. Intuitively, this makes sense. However, it's worth having a faculty-wide discussion on</p>	<p>Regarding the drop in enrollment, we agree that it's worth exploring whether the separation of the induction program from the master's program might have contributed to this trend, especially given the national teacher shortage. We will initiate a faculty-wide discussion to analyze the data and trends more deeply, including the impact of this separation, to see if there are patterns that need to be addressed. It is important that we stay proactive in responding to shifts in enrollment and ensure that we are adapting to the changing landscape in education.</p> <p>We also appreciate the insight about our recruitment efforts being closely tied to the teaching credential programs at CSUF. While this connection makes sense, we</p>	<p>The program was separated because CTC found irregularity with it. It was not clearly defined or separated from the other program, so there can be discussion on this topic, but it is important to move forward regarding how to improve enrollment in spite of this change. What are specific steps that will be taken to increase enrollment?</p>



<p>proactive student recruitment efforts outside of the candidates coming straight from the credential programs, especially to recruit & retain students from historically marginalized communities. With this conversation, support mechanisms (e.g., mental health support) are recommended to be discussed.</p> <p>The current scope of available coursework provides an excellent space for students to carve their niche in special education. To further expand the scope of coursework options, we would also like to suggest the potential addition of new courses that could further enrich students' learning experiences.</p>	<p>agree that it's crucial for us to expand our recruitment strategies beyond the traditional pipeline. Engaging with prospective students from historically marginalized communities is a priority. We look forward to having a faculty-wide conversation about how we can proactively recruit and retain a more diverse student body. Additionally, discussing support mechanisms such as mental health resources and other student services will be essential to ensure that all students feel supported throughout their academic journey.</p> <p>Finally, we are glad to hear that the current scope of coursework is well-regarded, and we agree that expanding our offerings could provide even more opportunities for students to specialize and deepen their knowledge in specific areas of special education. We will certainly consider adding new courses and look forward to hearing additional ideas from faculty and students alike.</p>	
<p>III. Student Academic Achievement & Assessment</p> <p>Recommendations: A follow-up post-graduation needs assessment survey would be valuable in identifying and addressing systemic career challenges faced by graduates. This</p>	<p>We have a year-out survey, but the response rates have been very low. We will work to both increase response rates as well as engage faculty in discussions around what the survey data reveals and how the feedback can be used to drive program improvement efforts.</p>	<p>I appreciate the recommendations and the responses.</p>



<p>survey could provide critical insights into obstacles encountered in securing employment and advancing within the field, enabling the program to better support graduates' professional development and program improvement.</p> <p>More in-depth details would be beneficial about the mentoring program available to SPED MS students (e.g., the measurable impact it has had on students' academic and professional development).</p> <p>Develop materials (e.g., brochures, orientation sessions) to communicate SLOs clearly to students, helping them understand how their learning is assessed.</p> <p>A detailed explanation of how specific data outcomes have led to revisions in course design or shifts in teaching strategies would provide greater insight into the program's responsiveness to student performance and feedback.</p>	<p>Your suggestion to provide more in-depth details about the mentoring program is timely. We recognize the importance of mentoring in fostering students' academic and professional growth. To improve transparency and demonstrate the program's impact, we will work on developing a more structured evaluation of the mentoring program. This could include gathering feedback from mentors and mentees to assess the measurable outcomes in students' academic success and career progression. This data will help us refine the program to support our students' needs better.</p> <p>Effective communication of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) is essential for helping students understand how their learning is being assessed and how it connects to their future goals. To enhance clarity, we will create materials such as brochures and host orientation sessions that clearly outline the SLOs and how they relate to course expectations. These resources will be designed to ensure that students understand what is expected of them and how their progress is measured, ultimately empowering them to take ownership of their learning journey.</p> <p>A more detailed explanation of how data outcomes inform course design and teaching</p>	
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	<p>strategies would be valuable for demonstrating the program's responsiveness to student performance and feedback. We will work to provide more explicit documentation that shows how feedback from students and assessment results directly influences revisions to course content and teaching methods. This transparency will help reinforce the program's commitment to continuous improvement and ensure that teaching strategies are always aligned with the needs and goals of our students.</p>	
<p>IV. Faculty</p> <p>Recommendations: It is encouraged to consider furthering faculty involvement in funding initiatives to both secure resources for the institution and provide students with experience in grants and research opportunities.</p> <p>There is also potential to strengthen student-faculty collaboration in research, as students could benefit from more opportunities in peer-reviewed publications and academic conferences. It is noted that two faculty members are currently engaged in these activities—expanding faculty participation would enhance research opportunities for students, faculty, and the program overall.</p>	<p>We will encourage faculty to seek out collaborative funding opportunities that integrate student involvement. By developing structured pathways for students to actively participate in grant writing, we can enhance their academic experience while contributing to the program's growth. We will also provide support for faculty through workshops and training on grant writing and funding strategies to empower them to seek out and secure external funding for both their own research and student-driven projects.</p> <p>Strengthening student-faculty collaboration in research is an excellent recommendation. We agree that expanding opportunities for students to participate in peer-reviewed publications and academic</p>	<p>Again, great suggestions and responses. I love the idea of more student/faculty connections through research, especially with an all online mostly asynchronous program.</p>



<p>More information is needed on the professional development opportunities faculty engage in, including the types of activities, their frequency, and how they support faculty growth and effectiveness in the program. Additionally, there should be a continued effort to challenge faculty to participate in professional development activities.</p> <p>Create orientation and professional development sessions for part-time faculty to ensure alignment with program goals and teaching expectations, enhancing course coherence and quality.</p>	<p>conferences would be invaluable in preparing them for careers in academia or research-driven roles. To enhance these opportunities, we will encourage faculty to collaborate more broadly with students on research projects. This could include creating research assistant positions or formalizing pathways for students to engage in the research process, from data collection to manuscript preparation. Additionally, we will work on increasing the number of faculty involved in these activities by promoting the benefits of student research mentorship and providing resources or incentives for faculty to engage in such collaborations. This will not only benefit students but will also raise the program's visibility and academic impact.</p> <p>We recognize the importance of professional development in enhancing faculty effectiveness. We will create a more comprehensive system for tracking and sharing professional development opportunities to address the need for more information on faculty development activities. This could include maintaining an updated record of faculty involvement in workshops, conferences, and other relevant activities and linking these activities to their impact on faculty growth and teaching quality.</p>	
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	<p>Additionally, we will encourage faculty to actively share their experiences from professional development activities with colleagues to foster a culture of continuous learning and growth. Moving forward, we will also explore ways to recognize faculty participation in professional development to ensure alignment with program goals and continuous improvement.</p> <p>Providing orientation and professional development sessions for part-time faculty is crucial for maintaining the quality and coherence of the program. Many part-time faculty may not be fully aware of program expectations or the resources available to them, which can lead to inconsistencies in teaching. To address this, we will implement regular orientation sessions for part-time faculty at the start of each term, focusing on program goals, teaching expectations, and available support systems.</p> <p>Additionally, we will offer ongoing professional development workshops tailored to part-time faculty to help them stay current with best practices in teaching, course design, and student engagement. This initiative will help ensure alignment with program objectives and improve the overall quality of instruction across all faculty members.</p>	
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	Currently, we do not have any part-time faculty in our graduate program.	
<p>V. Student Support & Advising</p> <p>Recommendations: Develop a structured and consistent communication strategy to keep students informed about available resources, workshops, and support services within and outside the department.</p> <p>Presenting diverse career options for current and future students in the program might be beneficial.</p> <p>Expanded opportunities for career & future planning workshops would be beneficial. Guest speakers to these workshops may be considered. Also, students could be encouraged & informed to attend conferences where there are opportunities and information regarding careers outside of K-12 education (e.g., state & federal level SPED legislature, research institution, curriculum companies).</p>	<p>To improve the communication strategy, we can establish a more centralized and accessible system for disseminating information about resources, workshops, and support services. This can include a dedicated digital platform, such as a student portal, creating of a Canvas community or monthly newsletters, that consolidates all relevant information in one place. In addition, we could utilize a multi-channel approach—such as email, social media, and a website—to ensure that all students receive timely updates. A clear calendar or resource map outlining the different services available throughout the semester can provide clarity and easy navigation. Presenting a wider range of career options beyond the traditional K-12 paths can be highly beneficial. To make this a reality, we can curate a series of career exploration sessions highlighting roles in diverse sectors such as policymaking, advocacy, curriculum development, research, and roles in non-profit or government organizations. Collaboration with alumni and professionals working outside K-12 education could be a great way to showcase these opportunities. Additionally, offering students a chance to</p>	<p>Again, great suggestions and responses. I hope this centralized Canvas community is created. But if created, it has to have a faculty member who is willing to do the upkeep.</p>



	<p>engage in informational interviews or job shadowing experiences in these areas would give them a deeper understanding of potential career trajectories. This effort will help students see the value of their degrees in a broader context, enriching their overall career outlook. Expanding career planning workshops can give students more tailored opportunities to plan for their futures. These workshops could cover various topics such as career transitions, job market trends, building a professional portfolio, and leveraging graduate studies for career advancement. Offering these workshops more frequently—perhaps once per semester—would provide students with ongoing support as they move through the program. Furthermore, inviting guest speakers who are experts in various career fields (e.g., professionals from state and federal SPED legislation, research institutions, and private industry) will expose students to various career possibilities. We should also consider creating a mentoring program that pairs students with professionals who work in these non-traditional settings, fostering both personal and professional growth. Encouraging students to attend conferences, especially those focusing on careers outside K-12 education, is a valuable suggestion. To</p>	
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	<p>further enhance this initiative, if the budget permits, we could offer financial support for travel or help students find scholarships to attend key conferences in the field. We can also develop a structured plan that guides students in identifying and selecting conferences that align with their career interests, whether in policy, research, or curriculum design. To maximize the benefit of conference participation, pre-conference preparation sessions could be organized to help students understand how to network effectively, which sessions to attend, and how to approach career fairs. Additionally, creating opportunities for students to share their conference experiences in post-event debriefing sessions would foster a sense of community and allow for collective learning.</p>	
<p>VI. Resources & Facilities</p> <p>Recommendations: Collaborate with library administration to improve access to practical resources and connect students and faculty with necessary teaching tools and case studies that aid in their educational pursuits.</p>	<p>We could begin by working closely with library staff to identify key resources that would benefit the special education program, such as case studies, research databases, and digital tools specifically aligned with the curriculum. This collaboration could also include creating curated resource collections accessible to students and faculty via the library's digital platform, ensuring timely access to essential</p>	<p>We have a new library liaison, Rachel Riter. Reaching out to her would be a great start.</p>



	<p>materials. Additionally, we could explore integrating library resources more directly into the program's courses. For example, organizing library workshops or orientation sessions at the start of each term could teach students how to efficiently search for and utilize relevant resources for their coursework and research projects. We could also discuss the feasibility of acquiring practical teaching tools, like instructional materials, assessments, or special education software, that would aid both faculty and students in implementing real-world teaching practices. Establishing regular communication between the department and the library could ensure that all necessary resources are up-to-date and accessible, ultimately enhancing the teaching and learning process for everyone involved. This collaboration will bridge any resource gaps, improve the quality of instruction, and equip students and faculty with the tools they need to excel in special education.</p>	
<p>VII. Long-Term Plans</p> <p>Recommendations: It is recommended that the program develop a clear and strategic plan that outlines specific long-term objectives, supported by having measurable short-term goals to guide progress.</p>	<p>To address the recommendation, we will begin by developing a comprehensive and strategic plan for the program that clearly outlines both long-term objectives and short-term goals. This strategic plan will include measurable</p>	<p>Excellent idea. Clear plans for what the department would like to achieve and how to achieve it would be an excellent idea. I would like to see a timeline for when that would be created and implemented.</p>



<p>Establishing quantifiable goals and metrics would help track the program's advancement and effectiveness.</p> <p>Additionally, the program is highly recommended to prioritize interdisciplinary initiatives (which is a trend in special education), incorporating supporting short-term goals to foster collaboration and innovation across disciplines.</p> <p>More clarification on what is meant by 'expanding honors' programs for students would be appreciated, including the definition of the honors program and its goals with potential opportunities.</p>	<p>metrics to track the program's progress and assess its effectiveness. Incorporating specific, quantifiable goals—such as student graduation rates, post-graduation employment statistics, or student satisfaction levels—will allow us to track success and identify improvement areas. By regularly evaluating these metrics, we can make data-driven adjustments to the program, ensuring it remains responsive to student needs and aligned with industry standards.</p> <p>In addition, we will prioritize creating interdisciplinary initiatives, recognizing that collaboration across disciplines is a growing trend in special education. These initiatives will foster collaboration and innovation, encouraging students and faculty to engage with professionals in psychology, social work, public health, and education policy. Short-term goals to support these initiatives include creating joint workshops, cross-disciplinary research projects, or collaborative classroom activities. This will not only expand students' perspectives but also enhance their ability to address complex challenges within special education. Our goal is to embed these interdisciplinary opportunities into the curriculum, ensuring that collaboration becomes an</p>	
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	<p>integral part of the student experience.</p> <p>Regarding the "expanding honors" programs for students, we will seek to provide more clarification by defining the structure and goals of the honors program. This clarification will outline the specific opportunities the program offers, such as research opportunities, advanced coursework, or leadership roles in departmental initiatives. By clearly communicating these opportunities to students, we can better attract motivated individuals to participate and ensure they understand the benefits of engaging in the honors program. We will also explore creating specific pathways within the honors program that encourage student-driven projects, mentorship with faculty, and opportunities to present research or attend conferences, further enriching the student experience.</p>	
<p>VIII. Appendices</p> <p>Recommendations: We would like to recommend enhancing the CSUF SPED MS program webpage to better serve recruitment purposes. Recommendations to enhance the webpage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slideshow of pictures featuring students and faculty. • Keep Dr. Jung's Video with captions 	<p>We will curate images that reflect the diverse student body, faculty engagement, and the hands-on learning experiences that make the program special. This visual element will make the webpage more appealing and provide a realistic glimpse into the day-to-day experiences in the program.</p> <p>Keeping Dr. Jung's video as a key feature on the homepage is an excellent idea. We will</p>	<p>Great! What is the timeline for these changes? Is there a plan?</p>

<p>and interactive highlights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive buttons for “Apply Now,” “Student Success Stories,” and course details. <p>An active advertisement of the 100% virtual nature of the program.</p>	<p>enhance this video by adding captions to make it more accessible, as well as interactive highlights that allow viewers to jump to specific sections of interest (e.g., faculty introduction, program benefits, application process). This will not only improve accessibility but also engage viewers and allow them to find key information quickly, making it a more user-friendly experience for prospective students.</p> <p>We will incorporate prominent, easy-to-navigate interactive buttons such as “Apply Now,” “Student Success Stories,” and “Course Details.” These buttons will be placed strategically on the webpage to ensure visitors can easily access critical information. The "Apply Now" button will be linked directly to the application portal, while the "Student Success Stories" button will showcase testimonials or case studies of past graduates. The “Course Details” button will allow prospective students to view a comprehensive breakdown of program offerings, ensuring they have all the information needed to make an informed decision.</p> <p>To attract students who are interested in online education, we will prominently feature an advertisement or banner that highlights the program’s 100% virtual nature. This feature will appeal to a</p>	
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	<p>broader audience, including working professionals or out-of-state students, by emphasizing the flexibility and convenience of completing the program fully online. We will ensure this information is easy to spot, possibly through a rotating banner or a dedicated section that outlines the benefits of the virtual format.</p>	
<p>Other Comments: CSUF's Special Education master's program is a strong, student-centered program with a clear commitment to fostering just, equitable, and inclusive education for all learners. The program's core values are explicitly articulated, reflecting a well-defined vision. It was an honor to review such a phenomenal program!</p>	<p>It's encouraging to hear that the program's commitment to just, equitable, and inclusive education resonates strongly. To build on the strengths highlighted, we can continue to enhance and communicate our core values and vision in ways that align with the evolving needs of our diverse student body and the communities we serve.</p> <p>One key area for improvement could be ensuring that the program's mission is consistently reinforced through both internal and external communication channels, such as through the program's webpage, student orientations, and community engagement events. Providing tangible examples of how these core values are embedded in coursework, practicum experiences, and research projects will help strengthen the narrative of our commitment to these values.</p> <p>Additionally, fostering even more student engagement</p>	

	<p>through mentorship opportunities, alumni networks, and collaboration with community organizations can offer students more hands-on experiences that align with the program’s mission. Building stronger partnerships with local schools, advocacy groups, and professional organizations can provide students with real-world contexts to apply their learning and further promote a just, equitable, and inclusive educational environment.</p>	
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