**Unit Strategic Plan**

**2021- 2023**

Every two years, during spring semester, programs/departments/service units are asked to develop Unit Strategic Plans. These plans need to be closely aligned with the Institutional Action Priorities, the College’s Long Range Goals, and the College’s five year strategic plan. The Strategic Plans incorporate and reflect the operation of that unit at all campuses and instructional sites. Each unit’s budget needs to reflect the fiscal implications associated with the unit’s identified goals and objectives.

**Name of Program/Department: Child Development**

**Mission Statement (for the program or department):**

***“Positively Imprinting Young Children’s and Families’ Lives Through Education”***

The mission of the Jefferson State Community College Child Development Department is to provide a quality, innovative program of study and to promote Child Development (Early Care and Education) as a professional field of study. The Child Development program is the first associate degree program in Alabama to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC).

**Summary of Access, Productivity and Effectiveness (Including, but not limited to, program load, success rate, retention rate, completion rate, employer surveys, student surveys):**

**Accessibility:** Analysis of data from the Student Profile Data Report by CIP shows enrollment as maintained. Students are offered courses mainly online due to a trend in registration showing students choosing only this option mostly within the last two years. Hybrid (half on-line and half in class mainly in dual enrollment), offsite, and online, are offered both full and half semester. All courses are now offered every semester to allow for students to access all CHD courses and expedite their degree completion. The “compact courses” offered every semester which currently focuses on the Basic Certificate, enable students including dual enrollment students to complete coursework in half the time while maintaining the integrity, and more importantly the learning of a full semester course for accreditation.

**Productivity:** Productivity is average based on the enrollment and status of part-time students. The program has two full-time faculty and utilizes 2 part-time instructors each semester.

**Diversity:** Institutional Research data indicates a uniquely diverse student population regarding gender, race/ethnicity and especially age as presented in the following student profile data. The age range of our students runs from high school; to bachelor degreed individuals returning to receive additional education for working with younger children; to first generation individuals; to individuals in returning to school after a break ranging from 3-20 years who are in their 50s and 60s. Additionally, a very high percentage of students work full-time in the field of study. The professional field is heavily female and male students are encouraged at all times.

**Retention Rate:** Retention is a challenging topic for our program and its unique student population. While we wish retention was 100%, we find the program in the midst of current issues and unexpected needs and changes in work-force development. Covid-19 has been a part of an unexpected event that has increased the need in work-force development due to the shortage of CHD teachers and directors. Dual Enrollment has added to our base numbers and will not translate into program completers unless the students choose to continue their education after high school. Additionally, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education has required state PreK teachers who have a bachelor’s degree in early childhood-Elementary to return to college to take nine hours of Child Development omitted from their current degree in order to teach in the expanding state PreK program. While we hope the students represented in these two groups choose to continue their studies, we have limited expectations for either of these two groups. We do feel there is a greater opportunity for retention with the dual enrollment students than for the already bachelor degreed students who are returning to achieve the nine hours of” add-on” education. All of our dual enrollment CHD courses are being offered online due to Covid-19. As of last spring of 2020, we have eight high schools including home school associations where students are enrolled in our CHD Basic Certificate program. We have also been asked to serve on the Birmingham City School Advisory Board for Early Childhood Education to recruit new students and retain any that are currently enrolled in the program. We are actively recruiting additional high schools. The college is always ready to add a school through the SACSCOC Prospectus to offer additional CHD classes via dual enrollment at offsite locations.

The traditional students remain as previously described in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. Most students are working full-time women with families who are attending college part-time. We continue to have students who enter the program with the intention of receiving the CDA, a nationally recognized credential. Some of these students then choose to continue their education. With the basic certificate which includes the aforementioned three designated courses and an additional course, it is hoped this certificate will further encourage students to continue their education

As with most community college programs, life also seems to be a challenge in pursuing an uninterrupted education, family issues, employment, the global pandemic etc. The good news is some of these students whose education was interrupted do find a way to return.

Economy impacted the retention rates as well this term. A significant number of childcare programs closed due to Covid-19, which affected the economy which limited access to work-based scholarships. Additionally, the minimal requirements for this field of study in Alabama is 12-15 training hours in licensed programs remains. As new programs are implemented by the State Department of Early Childhood Education - PreK, the State Department of Education-Dual Enrollment, and the State Department of Human Resources-Child Care Services – Quality Rating and Improvement System, it is hoped there will be a positive impact on the Child Development Program growth.

**Completion Rate:**

With the addition of the Basic Certificate, the numbers of certificates have increased. However, the number of degree graduates has declined. This decline is believed to be a part the aforementioned economic challenges. The numbers of upcoming degree-seeking candidates is increasing, and a continuation of an upward trend is expected. Recruitment continues through program advertising, promoting awareness of scholarship opportunities, participation in childcare community activities, and advocacy to strengthen educational expectations of teachers of young children.

**Internal Conditions:**

1. **Technology**

Blackboard Ultra has been implemented across the campuses. Technical training is being provided. There has been a welcomed improvement in the response to technical challenges. As more and more students move to an online format for courses, technology access is important. Current inquiries have indicated that there is an increased desire to take CHD courses primarily online.

Computer access is available for all faculty. Full-time faculty have computers in each office and part-time have access to computers in the part-time offices located at both Jefferson and Shelby Campuses. Laptops have also been provided to all full-time faculty for remote work when this applies. A shared printer is available at both campuses. The classrooms when used by the CHD program at the Jefferson and Shelby Campus have a computer and projector. Technology support is available and maintained for faculty. Updated equipment, as well as new equipment will be requested as needed.

1. **Budget**

Program needs for the classrooms and instruction are sufficient. Student resource materials for the resource rooms at the Shelby and Jefferson Campuses; program professional development; faculty office supplies; and accreditation fees are also provided. Membership fees to professional organizations are currently not provided but it is hoped this will be revisited. The Program’s annual conference expenses are prepaid by faculty and reimbursed after conference attendance. After review, we discussed other training opportunities that could benefit the faculty but would not interfere with teaching for those who teach residential, hybrid, or dual-enrollment courses.

1. **Staffing**

The Child Development Program has two full-time faculty and one L-19 part-time faculty. In addition, part-time faculty are contracted on an as needed basis. All CHD faculty are required to have postgraduate studies in field and in-field experience. The Child Development Program recently hired an adjunct faculty member to teach additional courses as needed.

Three full-time Center for Professional, Career, and Technical Education Office Managers are housed at the Jefferson campus are available to assist the programs in Career Tech as needed.

1. **Resources**

The Child Development program is fortunate to have a well-rounded advisory committee representing state early childhood departments and programs; senior educational institutions; county representatives of families with young children; administrators of childcare programs; and students. The value in this diversity is the opportunity for broad program support and guidance.

Currently, the CHD Program is working with three state departments on new projects: State Department of Education on dual-enrollment students, State Department of Early Childhood Education on the new and expanding PreK program, and the State Department of Human Resources on the Quality Rating and Improvement System as well as their Alabama Infant-Toddler Professional Development Network. However, we have now added advocacy to our program and have joined Voices for Alabama’s Children as one of the front runners of the steering committee to advocate for funding, resources, and quality in our childcare programs across this state. It is hoped these collaborations will continue.

The Child Development Program is accredited by the NAEYC’s Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation. Annually, a program report is submitted, and fees are paid. Faculty attend national and state conferences/meetings to keep abreast of current research, teaching methods, current accreditation information, and advocacy on behalf of the early childhood field. We have now enhanced our current partnership with the CDA Council for Professional Recognition to create additional pathways to obtain a CDA after completion of the educational component at Jefferson State.

1. **Enrollment**

The Child Development Program’s enrollment has remained steady. Expansion of the on-line course offerings have not only grown but have resulted in more students attending from around the state, in particular, places where access to education is challenging.

Dual Enrollment is providing a more diverse student population in the program. Students range in age from late teens to early sixties and the in-between students’ average age is in the mid-thirties adding a richness of perspectives to the learning opportunities. There are eight high schools being served.

1. **Facilities**

Three faculty offices are provided at the Jefferson Campus, two offices for full-time Faculty and one office for part-time faculty. At the Shelby campus there is a shared office space for full-time faculty and a part-time instructor office for other faculty. Additionally, there are two primary Child Development classrooms one located at both, the Jefferson and Shelby Campuses, respectively as well as access to additional classrooms if needed. Each campus has a dedicated resource room with library and other materials for students to explore and use.

1. **Equipment**

Classrooms and resources rooms are adequately equipped. Each classroom is equipped with tables and chairs at the Jefferson Campus and desks at the Shelby Campus. Computers and overhead projectors are also included in the classrooms.

Each campus resource room contains books, educational materials, consumables and teaching equipment. Requests will continue to be made to maintain and upgrade instructional equipment and classroom/office supplies as needed.

As previously mentioned, there is office equipment in the form of computers and printers available, as well.

**External Conditions (such as state funding, accrediting agencies, advisory committees, postsecondary policy changes):**

This 2020-2021 year, the Child Development program celebrates its Fifty-Third Anniversary and its thirteenth-year anniversary as Alabama’s first two-year college AAS degree program accredited by NAEYC. Specific guidelines and recommendations are provided by an annual report to document program improvements. Specific guidelines and recommendations are provided by Higher Education Degree Accreditation to support program improvement.

The program has an advisory committee that meets bi-annually. The advisory committee is comprised of members of the early childhood community and community-at-large, part-time faculty and a student representative. Input from this committee is valued and is used to help meet the needs of the program, the students, the community and the profession.

The Child Development program follows the policies and procedures of the Alabama Community College System.

**2019-2020 Accomplishments:**

* Accreditation continues to be maintained
* Program quality through faculty professional development and the review of program processes in curriculum and instruction are continuing
* Additional compact courses continue to be filled
* Dual enrollment courses continue to provide the educational components of the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and the Basic Certificate
* Interactive learning facilities/faculty resources are readily available
* Implementation of Live Classrooms to enhance the online learning experience
* Implementation of Employer Job Submissions to connect employers with students statewide
* Addition of apprenticeships and immediate employment for practicum students
* Launch of virtual student events including relaunch of our Alpha Beta Chi Organization

**2020-2021 Accomplishments:**

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* Launch of virtual student events including relaunch of our Alpha Beta Chi Organization
* Creation of Additional pathways to enhance the CDA Education Component in our Program
* Launch of the CDA Cohort Program
* Launch of the Child Development Virtual Job Fair

Considerations for Development of Unit Strategic Plans:

1. What can be done to improve the operation of the unit? **Continuing assessments of new and current implementations. Ongoing feedback from leadership, faculty, advisory committee members, and students.**
2. What are the desired Student Learning Outcomes/Program Learning Outcomes/Service Unit Outcomes for each unit**? To continue to enhance career readiness in child development through quality teaching and research-based practices. We also want to continue to see successful completion of Key Assessments within our courses and growth through enhance partnerships with child development and early childhood education organizations in and out of the state of Alabama.**
3. What equipment/resources are needed to accomplish the unit’s goals and objectives? **We do not need additional resources at this time to accomplish these unit goals and objectives other than our required fees to maintain accreditation.**
4. Are there any goals or objectives that were not completed from previous years that should be included in the new plan? **While the Stepping Stones workshop was originally a part of our plans, it was shifted due to the pandemic. Since it is not required, we do not consider this a plan/goal/objective not being met, but an event that we will postpone until it is safe to proceed with it.**
5. Can the performance of the unit be addressed by professional development? **Yes, in quality teaching and learning there is always more to learn to help enhance how we reach students in our program and child development communities.**

**Unit Goals: 2021-2022**

**GOAL 1**- **To maintain accreditation- Ongoing**.

1. Objectives:
2. To complete and submit Self-Study Report
3. To ensure that that NAEYC standards and key assessments are being met in the selected CHD courses.
4. Prepare for Self-Study Report in March of 2022
5. Additional Funding Requests:
6. Annual Accreditation Fee- $1683.00 (Due March. 31st)
7. Site Visit Fee $6500 (After submission of Self-Study due in July or Dec of 2022

**GOAL 2- To improve quality instruction through faculty/professional development and the review of program curriculum and instruction- Ongoing**

1. Objectives
2. Monthly/Semester Faculty Meetings (Review of faculty evaluation of courses and adjust where needed)
3. Technical and Professional Development Trainings to ensure quality instruction is implemented.
4. Bi-annual Child Development Advisory Meetings
5. Additional Funding Requests:
6. Funding for potential technical/ instructional training, i.e., Webinars, etc.

$2,000

1. Funding estimate for meetings: $750 estimated

**GOAL 3: To enhance the number of dual enrollment sites in the greater Birmingham and surrounding areas while ensuring intentional and modified teaching instruction is being given.**

1. Objectives
2. Faculty will continue to work with dual enrollment office regarding student need and success
3. Faculty will continue to review the course offerings and methods of courses delivered
4. Faculty will provide more information sessions to the community at high schools about dual enrollment including what happens after completion
5. Faculty will assist as requested in the process of making sure all dual enrollment sites are cleared under the SACSCOC requirements.
6. Additional Funding Requests

No Additional Costs

**GOAL 4: Continued improvement to interactive learning facilities/faculty resources**

1. Objectives
2. Provide any needed faculty/instructional resources
3. Evaluate current and upcoming needs of the resource room at both the Shelby and Jefferson campus
4. Additional Funding Requests
5. Routine program, instructional and office supplies: $2,000

**GOAL 5: Expand professional community outreach to enhance student and teacher learning opportunities and program recruitment-Ongoing**

1. Objectives
2. Faculty will continue to be involved in professional organizations and serve in professional capacities both state and local.
3. Faculty will continue to market for the program on campus, in various education, online, and community outlets (Ex. Social Media page for all CHD students, Share and Promote the Jefferson State online content for CHD)
4. Evaluate the Stepping Stones Workshop of Summer of 2019 and prepare for Stepping Stones Workshop potentially in summer of 2022 or 2023)
5. Additional Funding Requests (Contingent upon Covid-19)
6. Stepping Stone Workshop- $4000 fully refunded
7. Instate travel expenses $1,000
8. Program Marketing Materials- $2500

**Unit Goals: 2022-2023**

**GOAL 1**- **To maintain accreditation- Ongoing**.

1. Objectives:
2. To complete and submit Annual Report in Sept. of 2022
3. To ensure that that NAEYC standards and key assessments are being met in the selected CHD courses.
4. Prepare for Site Visit
5. Additional Funding Requests:
6. Annual Accreditation Fee- $1683.00 (Due Sept. of 2022 or March. 31st of 2023)
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