A1. Highlights Related to AA Goal 1: Educate a diverse student body through an integrated academic experience that positions graduates for personal success and civic responsibility in the global environment of the 21st century.

The SPCD department is currently beginning to undertake a redesign of its initial licensure programs, with attention to evaluating coursework for providing a sufficient focus on practices for inclusion of students with disabilities, the use special education technology, diversity content that promotes culturally responsive practices, and the use evidence-based special education practices. At the same time, the department will be paying attention to more effective clinical practices, retention, and timely graduation. This is especially important in a time of severe nationwide teacher shortages (exacerbating a previous shortage in special education), a local initiative for universal preschool, and competitive teacher preparation options that may not be effective at producing high-quality teachers.

At this time, faculty members have been identified to lead and to participate in this initiative, and redesign work will begin in the summer of 2018. The redesign effort is especially crucial to the CHFD program in that the local school district is moving toward mandating universal preschool, which will create a need for over 300 preschool teachers in the next 5 years. It is imperative that the CHFD program create an undergraduate licensure program that will appeal to non-traditional students who may already be working in the field. A plan to address this is in progress and should be implemented in 2018-19.

During the fall of 2017, the SPCD department had an enrollment of 136 students in its licensure programs: (a) CHFD - 38, (b) SPED - 58, and (c) Dual major (SPED/ELED) - 40. There were also declared pre-majors in CHFD (54) and SPED (56), as evidence of continuing numbers in the undergraduate programs. The department also had 104 students enrolled in the SPED graduate alternate certificate program and 20 enrolled in the CHFD graduate alternate certificate program. (These numbers will serve as baseline for future reports.)

A special focus in the department's redesign is on the alternate certificate programs in which students seek initial licensure at the graduate level. SPCD faculty are currently searching for ways to decrease the number of graduate hours needed to become certified while still meeting all state, CAEP, and professional (CEC) standards. This would decrease the tuition cost to students. In addition, faculty are investigating the feasibility of non-traditional methods of delivery to make their alternate certification programs more attractive in a competitive market. Faculty hope to have these changes finalized, approved, and implemented in 2018-19.

In the past year, the SPCD department also has focused on issues to improve its graduate programs. Current graduate enrollment numbers as of Fall 2017 included the following: (a) ASD graduate certificate - 11, (b) AIG certificate - 52, (c) CHFD M.Ed. - 28, (d) SPED M.Ed. - 15, (e) CHFD MAT - 2, (f) SPED MAT - 29.

Because the AIG, CHFD, and SPED Master's programs have been targeted for low enrollment twice in the past 4 years, the SPCD graduate program directors and faculty met with a representative of the UNCC Graduate School and decided to combine the three M.Ed. programs in AIG, CHFD, and SPED into one single SPCD master's degree with three separate concentrations in these respective area. Paperwork is currently being completed in Curriculog to make this change, and the new program should go into effect in 2018-19. The SPCD department also changed its program structure in 2017-18 to reflect this move, with a separate monthly meeting being held for those involved in the SPCD graduate programs so they can discuss related issues and make changes.

In the past year, Associate Dean Hancock has led the graduate program directors in designing and implementing graduate program enhancement plans that will make the SPCD graduate programs more marketable. The combined M.Ed. is but one of the changes that has been made. It should be noted that all coursework in the AIG and SPED graduate programs is online to make it more attractive and convenient for students. The CHFD graduate program has moved in the direction of offering hybrid courses, with the understanding that their courses eventually will need to be moved to an online format to sustain enrollment in a competitive market.

Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::

A2. Highlights Related to AA Goal 2: To expand the frontiers of knowledge and leverage discovery for the public benefit through innovative programs that span the disciplines in research, creative activities, and graduate education.

The SPCD department is known for its innovative research productivity and its doctoral program and efforts are being made to maintain that reputation. Of the 21 enrolled doctoral students, two leadership grants from the U.S. Department of Education (PIs Browder/Test and Lo/Wood) funded 14 students, while federal (Test) and state (Beach) research grants funded 5 students.
All doctoral students in the program are required to engage in two team studies prior to their dissertation and are encouraged to publish the results of their work. In 2017, 14 SPCD faculty actively mentored doctoral students, and 5 faculty published 15 articles with current students.

In addition to publishing with students, SPCD faculty continued to have a high rate of publications in respected refereed research journals in their respective content areas. In 2017, 12 SPCD faculty published 37 articles across 19 journals, as well as 10 book chapters. The list of these publications can be found at the end of this section.

Faculty have also disseminated their work through professional presentations at conferences. In 2017, 19 faculty made a total of 106 presentations at professional conferences. The list of these presentations can be found at the end of this section.

To support their work, 10 SPCD faculty received funding for 13 grants (2 state grants, 2 personnel preparation grants, 2 federal research grants, 2 leadership grants, 2 national centers, 1 regional center, 1 foundation grant, and 1 UNCC grant). The total amount of funding for these grants (1-5 years) was $22,341,659. A list of funded grant, their PIs, and funding sources can be found at the end of this section.

Faculty in the SPCD department recognize the importance of securing funding for graduate students. At present, the department has three personnel preparation grants that support master's level students across (a) SPED - adapted curriculum (Spooner), (b) CHFD (Baughan to be replaced by Smith in 2018-19), and (c) SPED M.Ed. (Anderson) in conjunction with the Counseling program (Fox). Plans are currently in place to submit two new personnel preparation grants in the coming year (one in CHFD and one in SPED).

The SPCD department has several initiatives that will be a focus in 2018-19. First, the faculty member (W. Wood) who designed the ASD graduate certificate program recently retired. Two new faculty members with ASD experience (Pennington and Walker) have been hired to begin 2018-19 and will be charged with redesigning the ASD coursework to be appropriate for inclusion in a master's degree program to prepare students as Board-Certified Behavior Analysts. These faculty will work with C. Wood to have the BCBA program approved by both UNCC and the ABA board. It should be noted that most of the coursework for the BCBA already exists at UNCC.

Second, the CHFD program has a new graduate certificate program in Early Childhood Mental Health in conjunction with the Department of Social Work at UNCC. While this program got off to a good start 2 years ago, recent personnel changes in Social Work have kept the program from growing. Now that personnel have changed and stability is back in place, faculty member Smith will be recruiting new students for this program. Note that the numbers for this program are reported through the Department of Social Work.

Last, faculty member Smith also has begun work to create a new Master's degree program in Child Life, a nationally recognized credential that prepare early childhood majors to work in setting other than education (e.g., hospitals). A great deal of interest exists in students seeking this credential, and most of the coursework necessary for the credential currently exists at UNCC.

Faculty Publications:


Faculty Presentations

Agran, M., Copeland, S., Dymond, S., Lehr, D., & Spoonar, F. (2017, December). Publishing in RPSD (and other journals). Panel presentation at the annual meeting of TASH, Atlanta, GA.


Beach, K.D. & Cleaver, S. Middle school students’ motivation to read within a multi-component reading intervention. Poster presented at the annual meeting for the Pacific Coast Research Conference. San Diego, CA. (February, 2017).

Billingsley, B., Griffin, C., Hudson, R., Kennedy, M., Kilgo, K., Maheady, L., ... Spoonar, F. (2017, November). Research roundtables. In M. Leko (Chair), Research strand. Symposium presented at the annual meeting of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, Savannah, GA.


Gilson, C. M., & Chancey, J. (2017, July). Developing teacher creativity to inspire student creativity! Neag Center for Gifted Education Conference, Storrs, CT.


Ley Davis, L., & Spooner, F. (2017, May). Peer-mediated pictorial instruction on chained tasks for students with severe disabilities. In F. Spooner (Chair). Pictorial self-instruction to teach chained mathematical task to students with severe disabilities. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the Association for Behavior Analysis International, Denver, CO.


McKissick, B., Spooner, F., Ley Davis, L., Fisher, L., & Graves, C. (2017, December). Using computer-assisted instruction to teach grade-aligned science to students with ASD. Poster session conducted at the annual meeting of TASH, Atlanta, GA.


Sacco, D. & Reybold, L. E. (2017, November). "Every day is a Helen Keller moment": Child disability, mindfulness, and family quality of life.* Paper presented at the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. (AAACE), Memphis, TN.


Spooner, F. (2017, December). Expanding access to academic learning. In G. H. S. Singer (Chair), *Going to scale—research on systems change for people with severe disabilities: Education, employment, community living, and family support.* Colloquium conducted at annual meeting of TASH, Atlanta, GA.

Spooner, F., & Agran, M. (2017, December). *Promotion and tenure.* Panel presentation at the annual meeting of TASH, Atlanta, GA.


Spooner, F., & McKissick, B. (2017, December). *Developing and sustaining a research agenda.* Panel presentation at the annual meeting of TASH, Atlanta, GA.


Wakeman, S. (2017, November). *Improving the edTPA performance of pre-service special education candidates: One IHE’s journey.* Presentation at the annual meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children Teacher Education Division, Savannah, GA.

Werunga, R., Lo, Y.-y., & Owens, T. L. (2017, April). Examining the effects of a culturally responsive social skills curriculum on lower elementary African American students at-risk of emotional and behavioral disorders. Oral presentation at the annual meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Boston, MA.


Faculty Grants


Anderson, K., & Foxx, Sejall (2017, March). *Project Intensive Needs Teacher and Counselor Training (INTACT).* Interdisciplinary Preparation in Special Education, Early Intervention, and Related Services for Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities Who Have High-Intensity Needs (CFDA 84.325K), Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Proposal awarded (September 2017) $1,200,000.00 funding for 5 years.

Beach, K. North Carolina State Improvement Project (NC SIP) and Institute of Higher Education Partnership, Supported by NC SIP, $10,000, 2016-2017.

Beach, K., Co-PI, Vocabulary CHAAOS: Creating Habits Accelerating Academic Language of Students, supported by the U.S. Department of Education, IES, 2016-2019, $1,437,122. (Subcontract to UNCC: $177,946).

Browder, D. M. (replaced by Beach, K.) & Test, D. W. The PhD Program in Special Education at UNC Charlotte. OSEP, US-DOE, Preparation of Leadership Personnel. [Funded for four years, 8/1/14 – 7/31/19, $249,998 annually]


Sacco, D., Principal Investigator: (Awarded 2017) NCSIP IHE partnership. North Carolina State Board of Education: $10,000


Test, D. W., Kohler, P., & Fowler, C, Bost, L., Unruh, D., Luecking, R., & Morningstar, M. *National Technical Assistance Center on Transition. OSEP/RSA, US-DOE, National Technical Assistance Center on Improving Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students with Disabilities (CFDA 84.326E).* Funded at $2,500,000 annually. [Funded for five years, 2015-2019]


Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::

A3. Highlights Related to AA Goal 3: To engage community partners in mutually beneficial programs that enhance the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region.:

Faculty in the SPCD department are committed to service, as reflected in their faculty activities reports and their vitae. They serve on a number of committees in the department, college, and university as well as serving as program directors or program members to oversee their respective programs. In spite of this, they still participate in a large number of service activities that engage with the local community and with their professional organizations. The following are a sampling of 54 activities in which 13 faculty members took part in 2017-18. Also, two faculty engaged in coaching as part of the the College of Education Teacher Education Institute.

Consulting and Advising - 14 (e.g., Beach - HillRap Learning, NC DPI Literacy, The Hill Center, Augustine Literacy Project, Read Charlotte; Brown - Stanly County Community College Early Childhood program, Re-Charge, Head Start; Gilson - Metrolinia Scholars Academy; Matthews - Untapped Parent Potential Project, Seoul National University; McIntyre - Stanly County Community College, Metorlina Early Childhood Collaborative)


Committee Member of professional organization - 9 (e.g., Brown - Renaissance West Planning; Matthews - chair of special interest research group on gifted education for AERA; Sacco - Sponsorship committee for CLD, Elections committee and Professional standards committee for CEC; Spooner - Publications committee for TASH)

Professional Journal Editor - 6 (Baughan - *Literacy Development in Young Children, Collins - Rural Special Education Quarterly, Matthews - Gifted Child Quarterly and Journal of Advanced Academics, Spooner - Journal of Special Education and Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*)

Board member of Professional Organization - 5 (i.e., Baughan, Greenville Disability and Special Needs Board, Metrolina Early Childhood Collaborative, Charlotte Bilingual Preschool; Collins - HECSE; Matthews - National Association for Gifted)
Inservices and Workshops - 4 (e.g., FitzPatrick - writing and literacy workshops in Santo, Haiti, and Nashville, TN; Gilson and Matthews - Gifted Education workshop for Gaston County Schools)

Officer on a professional board - 3 (i.e., Collins - HECSE treasurer, Lo - president of NC Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, Wood - NC Regional representative to CEC)

Professional conference planning - 3 (i.e., Beach - Pacific Coast Research Conference, Matthews - NACG, Sacco - CLD)

Evaluator - 1 (Matthews - Promoting PLACE federal grant)

Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above:

B. Examples of Data-Based Improvements During the Year:

The SPCD department was recognized with the UNC Charlotte Office of Assessment and Accreditation 2018 Excellence in Assessment Award for the data-based changes faculty made in their programs based on the data that they collect. In addition, faculty member Wakeman received an award for her work with Laura Hart on validating and scoring reliability on the edTPA assessment with students seeking licensure. Dr. Cindy Gilson represented the SPCD department at the annual assessment meeting and gave the following report:

As a result of the College of Education’s initiatives to align Student Learning Outcomes with the CAEP standards, faculty in our department have conducted extensive work to update or create comprehensive rubrics to analyze student growth and subsequently improve our programs. AIG program

The AIG program has worked collaboratively with their adjunct professors during this process, since they play an important role in teaching, data collection, and evaluation. First, adjuncts were included in a panel of experts to validate the rubrics for major projects such as lesson plans. However, after piloting the rubrics, we noted that while 100% of teacher candidates met proficiency, not all assessments submitted were scored in Taskstream by the adjuncts or the students uploaded it to the wrong portfolio and thus scores were not counted. So we have worked hard to establish clearer expectations for assessment procedures.

CHFD GC

The Child and Family Development Program had extensive data meetings where they analyzed edTPA data from the Graduate Certificate in CHFD. Their goal was to design a more efficient set of courses to prepare candidates to be successful with edTPA completion. Multiple practice tasks were all originally housed in CHFD 5115. The team decided to split the tasks among two new courses, CHFD 6200 and CHFD 6230. Splitting up the practice tasks into multiple courses over two semesters gave students more time to understand the tasks.

CHFD BA

Similarly, CHFD analyzed Task 3 from their edTPA data for their Bachelor of Arts Program. In the 2015-2016 academic year, they noted rubric 13 for the edTPA Task 3 did not reach the 80% pass rate. Task 3 was originally taught and assessed in SPED 4210, which was held on-site with faculty supervision. However, the course was not able to be taught there in Fall 2015 and consequently, students were completing Task 3 without typical supervision. Therefore, the program moved practice Task 3 to a new course occurring during the yearlong internship at a school setting. As a result, this was a more meaningful experience for candidates in practicing edTPA skills and developing their knowledge. The following year, the passing rate was far the above 80% criterion (at 94% Spring).

SPED BA

The Special Education faculty analyzed edTPA data from candidates in their Bachelor of Arts program in SPED. Candidates made gains in edTPA tasks, equating to about a 30% increase in the % of candidates making proficiency (Ex. Task 1 and 3). These improvements occurred after multiple supports and changes were implemented. First, the SPED faculty improved information flow to key stakeholders, including adjuncts, by developing a video, concept map, handouts, and a support site in our online LMS. A new course mentor chart for adjuncts was disseminated. They also moved edTPA practices tasks from one course to another and added more lesson plan instruction in the program; instructors reviewed error patterns to remediate and improve student outcomes. Finally, to sustain growth, a standing agenda item is to review key assessment procedures and data at every program faculty meeting.

SPED Phd

Last, faculty from the SPED Ph.D. program reviewed their existing data sources, which included the dissertation proposal and defense, and created a rubric to capture this data source that was already in place. They created one rubric for the written dissertation proposal, or chapters 1-3 as well as two additional rubrics, one for the full written dissertation, or chapters 1-5, and one for the oral examination. These changes enhanced their already strong program by using common assessment rubrics and the majority of 2016 PhD candidates completed their dissertations successfully, which met the 80% criterion.

In addition to this report, the SPCD Department also used data in the following ways:
The SPCD doctoral program used many of its monthly meetings to evaluate its program by the Doctoral Program Quality Indicators from the Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE; Dept. Chair Collins served on the committee that created the list). As a part of the evaluation as well as feedback from the annual program assessment, the program fine-tuned its doctoral program through implementing doctoral student lunches to discuss content relevant to students but not covered in courses and a session to provide feedback on job interview presentations.

SPED seniors in the fall participated in aligned field experiences in fewer placements. Students indicated that courses were not aligning well and required more placements. The SPED undergraduate program reduced the number of placements to one whenever possible and ensured that assignments for multiple classes could be completed in one semester long clinical experience.

SPED faculty proposed and passed a motion to move EdTPA tasks to provide a more systematic development of practice tasks and reduce likelihood that students would have too many practice tasks at the same time. Task 3 was moved from SPED 4276, Secondary Reading to SPED 4277, Teaching Writing based on feedback from course instructors and student commentary.

Updates to the topical paper in SPED 3173 were made based on data (Instructor and student feedback) indicating that the intensity of the writing task were detracting from the course experience and were unnecessary data collection for state evidences. Faculty concluded that writing intensive expectations are currently measured by EdTPA writing in student teaching, but further development of academic writing experiences are required to ensure students have both a W course experience in SPED 3173 focusing on technical writing and extensive feedback in addition to consistent academic writing experiences (i.e., writing that summarizes research and utilizes APA format).

In the SPED M.Ed., MAT, and ASD certificate, major changes made last year were to finalize revised or newly developed rubrics for better alignment with SLOs and complete content validity procedures. All of the "new" rubrics were in effect last year (2017) to measure the SLOs. The following changes were made in 2017 to the SPED Graduate Certificate program: (a) additional support for faculty in edTPA task evaluation and (b) continual directive edTPA review for candidates during the student teaching experience. SPED Graduate Certificate candidates exceeded the goal on the three edTPA tasks.

**Major Accomplishments: Discussion:**

The Department of Special Education and Child Development recently placed number 14 in the ranking of special education programs by U.S. News and World Report, and its doctoral program has been recognized as one of the best in the nation. In the past 4 years, the SPCD department has lost five faculty members and will lose three more in the next 2 years, as well as having two go on phased retirement. (A number of these have been noted researchers in the field.) At the same time, the Department has hired eight new faculty members (four to begin in 2018-19) and hopes to hire two more in the coming year. To be strategic, the department is focusing on hiring those faculty who show evidence of research and grant writing skills, as well being recognized for their work in the field. For that reason, the department is currently focused on maintaining its high rankings, level of grant funding, number of publications, and mentoring of doctoral students, with the future goal of increasing this productivity once the number of faculty becomes stable.

Evidence of the high quality of the department faculty can be seen through the awards that faculty have won. In 2017-18, the following faculty were recognized with awards from their professional organizations:

Kristen Beach received the Niner Research Award from the UNCC Office for Research and Economic Development.

Kristen Beach received the Outstanding Review award from *Teaching Exceptional Children,* one of the premiere journals of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Diane Browder received the Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award from the Council for Exceptional Children Division for Autism and Developmental Disabilities.

Diane Browder received the Special Education Research Award from the International Council for Exceptional Children.

Belva Collins received the Eagle Award for lifetime service to the field or rural special education from the American Council for Rural Special Education.

Belva Collins received the North Carolina Special Education Teacher Educator of the Year Award from the North Carolina Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children.