

July 1, 2020

Meryl Sultanik  
Associate Professor/Coordinator of Education  
Montgomery County Community College  
340 DeKalb Pike  
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Dear Ms. Sultanik:

We are pleased to inform you that **the A.A. Education in the Early Years: Birth through Fourth Grade** degree program at **Montgomery County Community College** has earned continued NAEYC accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. The NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs finds this program to have met the conditions set by the Commission in the initial accreditation decision. Continued accreditation is awarded for a full seven-year term, through March 2025, as stated on the enclosed Accreditation Certificate.

The program had two previously cited conditions:

(1) Revise or create key assessments (student instructions, rubrics, and disaggregated data tables) for all standards to demonstrate explicit alignment with the depth and breadth of the standards and to meet the cognitive demands and skill requirements congruent with the standards.

(2) Provide evidence that the program is consistently analyzing and using data related to the standards to improve teaching and learning.

Condition #2 was previously met in the program's first Annual Report. In the current Annual Report, the program provided evidence that Condition #1 has also now been met. In particular, in response to the May 25, 2019, Commission letter following the first Annual Report, the instructions for each assessment are now clear and explicitly outline the tasks to be completed by candidates for the assessment. NAEYC's key elements that are being assessed are clearly identified in the instructions. Overall, the Commission found that:

- The rubrics for Key Assessments 1, 5, and 6 are generally well aligned with the NAEYC standards.
- All of the key elements identified in the instructions now are identified and assessed in the corresponding rubrics.
- The instructions are clear and the presentation of the assessments and rubrics is attractive and easy to follow.
- Overall, the program's assessments are designed to assess critical knowledge and skills in early childhood education, which will occur when the rubrics are rewritten in behavioral terms.

The Commission offers the following feedback on the program's revisions in response to the earlier feedback:

With regard to the assessments submitted in 2019, the Commission found that *"The rubrics continue to rely on general language and quantitative determiners. . . rather than language that captures the breadth, depth, and language of the key elements for which the rubric indicators are aligned."*

The current revisions to the rubrics have made them more qualitative and less quantitative, but they are still quantitative in a number of instances. Also, the rubrics primarily distinguish student performance at the three levels by adverbs such as "explicitly," "comprehensively," "thoroughly," "accurately," "in-depth,"

"strongly," and "clearly." These terms are subjective and can lead to different evaluators interpreting the terms differently.

In addition, not all of the rubrics are aligned with the depth and breadth of the NAEYC elements. The rubric for Key Element 1a in Key Assessment 2 requires alignment with state standards, which may focus on content knowledge rather than “knowing and understanding young children’s characteristics and needs.” The rubric descriptors for Key Elements 1c and 5a in Key Assessment 4 are not observable (e.g., what should the evaluator see in the thematic unit that convinces them that it supports healthy and challenging environments for grade level?). The rubrics for Element 5a and 5b do not directly assess those elements in Key Assessments 2 and 3; the rubrics do not assess a candidate’s content knowledge or understanding and use of the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas. The rubric for Key Element 1c on p. 43 of the second Annual Report does not incorporate developmental knowledge. The rubric for the criterion for Key Element 4b on p. 44 does not include the use of technology here or in other assessments. The Key Elements 1a and 1b are labeled incorrectly in Key Assessment 1 on pp. 28 and 29.

The feedback in response to the first Annual Report also noted that *“The program should revise the rubrics overall to include more detail to contextualize and describe what each key element represents.”*

The language of the rubrics for Key Assessments 1, 2, and 4 is similar to that in first Annual Report except that each rubric has been expanded to include some specific details. The rubrics for Key Assessments 3, 5, and 6 have been revised. The specifics added to the language of the rubrics are usually the expansion of a term (e.g., 1b in Key Assessment 1 identifies in parenthesis the domains as “physical, cognitive, social/emotional, language”), not specific observable behavior that would demonstrate that a candidate meets the standard.

In addition, some of the rubrics focus primarily on the required components (e.g., the rubric for 5b in Key Assessment 2 on p. 35) of the candidate’s submission rather than how the submitted evidence indicates that candidates have the understanding or skills expected to meet the key elements. For example, the rubric for Element 1b on p. 29 assesses whether “unbiased running records include required components of play experiences in each domain” rather than how these running records demonstrate that the candidate could use observation effectively in determining components of play in each domain.

Finally, the 2019 feedback from the Commission indicated, *“The program should ensure that they key elements that are identified in the student instructions are also measured in the corresponding rubric, and that the candidate performance is described in a way to clearly align with the designated key element.”* In the current key assessments, all of the key elements identified in the instructions are identified and assessed in the corresponding rubrics.

It is expected that the program will continue to build upon its strengths and engage in ongoing reflection and improvement. In this spirit of continuous improvement, the program is encouraged to consider the following:

- The rubrics would be improved by focusing the rubric language on how the candidate's submission demonstrates that they have developed the knowledge and skills related to the key elements.
- The rubrics would be improved by rewriting those that distinguish the levels only by the use of adverbs that may be subject to being interpreted differently by different evaluators.

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- The rubrics would be improved by ensuring that depth and breadth of the NAEYC key elements are well aligned in each of the rubrics
- Key Assessments 1 and 2 indicate that the assessment activity could be used with children from birth through age 8. However, the activities may be more appropriately used with children in preschool or the primary grades than infants. The program should review these two key assessments to determine the most appropriate ages of the child to be studied and the literacy lesson plan to be developed.

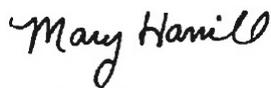
As you know, accreditation is maintained through submission of an Annual Report and Annual Fee; your reporting date, which remains the same each year, is on the cover page of the original Decision Report. Current fees are posted at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) and in the online accreditation community of practice. Accreditation expires seven years after the original Commission decision; one year before expiration, programs submit a new Self-Study Report and host a new site visit. (That is, the program will plan to submit Annual Reports by March 31, 2021, 2022, and 2023, prior to submitting a renewal Self-Study Report by March 31, 2024.)

As the program works toward renewal, the Commission encourages faculty to continue to use the online community website to maintain compliance with the accreditation standards, prepare Annual Reports, and sustain a culture of evidence-based quality improvement. Resources can be found on the website, through webinars and in-person professional development opportunities, and by contacting staff.

Congratulations on your program's continued accreditation. We encourage you to continue to use the online community website and the other resources available to maintain compliance with the accreditation

standards, prepare Annual Reports, sustain a culture of evidence-based quality improvement, and prepare for accreditation renewal. Please contact Pamela Ehrenberg, Director of Accreditation Services ([pehrenberg@naeyc.org](mailto:pehrenberg@naeyc.org)), if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Mary Harrill  
Senior Director  
Higher Education Accreditation & Program Support



Bridget Murray  
Commission Chair

cc: Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez, President