School of Professional Studies Draft Report for the MSCHE Self Study

**I. Program Updates- Early Childhood Education**

**A. Introduction: Program Development of the AA and BA in Early Childhood Education**

Middle States Standard 11 expects an institution to have quality programs that display academic sufficient content, rigor, and coherence with the mission of the institution. Through the self-study process, the School of Professional Studies (SPS) analyzed its academic offerings and made critical decisions about existing programs, while working to develop new programs for working students at the undergraduate level.

As part of a comprehensive Early Childhood Education program initiative, Trinity launched an Associate of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Education in Spring 2014, providing programming that promotes and advances the early childhood workforce; prepares students for a terminal degree; and establishes the pathway for pursuing additional coursework and degrees at Trinity. The degree responds to legislated changes requiring childcare workers to have completed a degree and have earned at least 60 college credits by 2017 and to the District’s and the nation’s longstanding critical shortages of credentialed early childhood workers.

The degree will join Trinity’s other programs in Early Childhood, including the BA in SPS and a proposed BA in CAS and the MAT and other related degrees in EDU along with the existing Early Childhood concentration in the AA at THEARC. With this proposed degree, Trinity emerges as the only regional university offering comprehensive early childhood programming at the associate’s, baccalaureate, and master’s level, making the University the true leader in early childhood education regionally.

To overcome any market competition with local community colleges, Trinity will position its program as the degree of choice through offering streamlined entry into bachelor’s-level programming that can continue promoting students on OSSE’s Career Lattice or other programs of interest post-graduation[[1]](#footnote-1). With dedicated preparation for the PRAXIS (a condition for licensure at the BA level) and other features that mark Trinity’s degree as one of excellence, Trinity will successfully address market competition.

Trinity’s many partners will play an active part in the degree’s launch and successes, ranging from providing TEACH and other DC funded scholarships to providing internships and students for the program: such partners include OSSE, Martha’s Table, Mary’s Center, KIPP, JumpStart, and other child care centers. The School of Education collaborated with the School of Professional Studies in delivering the degree and obtained State approval and national recognition including through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

**B. Data Snapshots and Discussion**

1. New Program (Since Fall 2013) Undergraduate Enrollment in SPS

New programs were carefully developed with academic partners and in review of market trends and industry growth. As is evidenced in the data above, the Early Childhood Education programs (AA and BA) have seen tremendous growth in enrollment since Fall 2013. With new off- site cohorts planned for 2015, those numbers will grow even more.

**C. Findings and Action Steps**

Key Findings:

* The addition of an AA in Early Childhood Education in the School of Professional Studies meets the needs of childcare workers who must earn at least 61 credits in the field by 2017 to maintain employment in the District of Columbia. The evening and weekend format allows them to continue to work full-time while pursuing their studies.
* Childcare centers are eager to enhance the educational attainment of their workers to meet the regulations in the District
* The BA in Early Childhood Education in SPS also serves the need of the childcare worker that wishes to become a teacher, particularly since DC provides Pre-School at age 3 to all residents through the public school system.
* Both programs were designed to meet or exceed the regulatory and/or licensure requirements of the District, while serving the social justice mission of Trinity

Action Steps:

* Trinity has scholarship funding from the District for early childhood workers servin DC children; partnering with Admissions to get the word out and increase interest in the programs is ongoing
* SPS and EDU are engaging in partnerships with outside organizations to develop cohorts of early childhood students throughout the region

**D. Recommendations**

The School of Professional Studies does not have any recommendations at this time.

1. Another option is Trinity’s AAS in Occupational Therapy, which provides another fundamental approach to enhancing early childhood welfare; coursework for the AA in Early Childhood parallels many of the AAS requirements. As Early Childhood programming coalesces, we anticipate that some students may take both the AAS and the AA, thus providing comprehensive care for the ‘whole child,’ an eminently marketable and complementary set of credentials. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)