

Advisory Committee Meeting - 11/15/19

Prairie's Edge Casino Resort

Attending: Lori Gunnink, Jenny Trager, Jodi Maertens, Nicole Rasmussen, Sue Thomes, Marge Knudson

Welcome and thanks! – Alyson Helgeson

Agenda:

1. Enrollment for Spring Semester 2020 and projected number of graduates.
2. Plans of graduates include continuing at SMSU, starting own Family Child Care, working in Child Care/Preschool Centers, and several were already employed full-time with Head Start, Reading Corp, public schools while completing their degrees.
3. Presented information on Introduction to Education course, the purpose, audience served and the configuration and presentation of course. The committee thought this was a great opportunity to introduce the field to additional students who may decide to pursue a career in education, which may include an increase in those interested in Early Childhood.
4. Trends – There is a continuing need in the region for not only more, but higher quality care for young children. Family Child Care continues to be an unfilled need, as well as spots for Infants. Marge and Nicole participate on the Yellow Medicine County Daycare Task Force committee. Head Start continues to struggle to fill teacher and asst. teacher openings, as many of their teachers have moved to public school positions or are not qualified per state and Head Start guidelines and licensing. I shared that I continually get job openings from local centers, Head Start, to share with students about job positions available. We had a conversation that licensing guidelines and requirements continue to become more stringent and pay for these positions is lower scale. We had a long discussion about ways to attract more people to this career and program, ways to provide incentives such as tuition reimbursement, child care incentive for their own children for those continuing education, etc. There was a discussion about the feasibility of transitioning this degree to completely online or another method (ex. Zoom) to attract additional students who may not be able to come to physical campus due to work, their physical location, family life, etc.
5. Updates on Current Program: looking to change program name from Child Development to Early Childhood to align with pathway to SMSU, as well as match industry terminology. The committee thought this was a good idea and commented that Early Childhood even has the sound of a more professional degree and career choice and discussed the idea of getting out of the stigma of “baby-sitters” and changing society’s

understanding that they are educators. Alyson presented on HLC process and shared course and program outcomes that have been revised and are currently being worked on. The committee had a long discussion about this and felt that the course and program outcomes matched what students should know and learn about in order to be proficient in the industry and meet increased training requirements, licensing and knowledge needed. Alyson also discussed the idea that we are looking to expand program to Worthington area to meet need in other regions and discussed ideas of how this expansion would be accomplished. Alyson also shared that we are discussing moving this program to hold additional classes online and piloting a hybrid class. The committee was in great support of this as it could attract more non-traditional students, those who need to work full time or have family commitments, and those who are not able to travel due to distance. The hope is that this could attract more students to the program which could then increase qualified staff in the field.

9. Advice- Incorporate more guidance courses based on updated licensing requirements, especially for extremely challenging behaviors, incorporate CLASS (which is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and training on Parent Aware which is a rating system for quality programs. Marge encouraged continuing information on the opportunities and support for establishing Family Child Care and committee brainstormed ideas on how this could be done.

Alyson thanked the group once again for their work on Advisory Committee and the plan for continuing communication and updates.

Child Development Program Advisory Committee

Jenny Trager, Prairie 5 Community Action
422-5th Ave., Box 166, Madison, MN 56256
320-598-7649
Jenny.trager@prairiefive.org

Marge Knudson, Child Care Aware of Minnesota
7th & Washington Ave., Box 159, Montevideo, MN 56265
320-269-8727
marge.knudson@prairiefive.org

Nicole Rasmussen, Child Care & Nutrition, Inc.
324 N. Norman Street, Ivanhoe, MN 56142
800-634-3359
ccnikids@frontiernet.net

Lori Gunnink, Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council
Head Start Director
1106 3rd Ave., P.O. Box 787

Worthington, MN 56187
507-376-4195
lgunnink@smoc.us

Sue Thomes
United Community Action Partnership
Child Care Aware Coordinator
PO Box 36
101 Vesta ST S
Cosmos, MN 56228
320-235-0850 x616
email: suet@unitedcapmn.org