

June 7, 2022

Virginia Harmelink  
Pima Community College  
5901 S. Calle Santa Cruz  
Tucson, AZ 85704

Dear Ms. Harmelink:

We are pleased to inform you that the **A.A.S. Early Childhood Studies** degree program at Pima 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: July 2019 – July 2026.

The program had two previously cited conditions:

1. Revise all rubrics so they provide objective and qualitative distinctions between levels of candidate performance expected with regard to each standard they are designed to assess.
2. Provide evidence that all candidates are required to complete all designated key assessments.

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.

The program has strengthened its rubrics by eliminating most of the vague language, eliminating the quantitative measures, and showing clearer distinctions between performance levels in most of the rubrics. The program did an excellent job of presenting the changes to the rubrics in its second Annual Report by presenting both the previous rubric row and the revised rubric row in a spreadsheet, making it very easy to compare the differences.

The Commission offers the following suggestions for continued program improvement:

1. Although most of the vague language was eliminated from the rubrics, some vague language remains in the "Meets Standards" column (e.g., "adequate" and "developing"). More specificity about the meaning of those terms would improve those rubrics.
2. The program is encouraged to consider opportunities in which measuring a key element in more than one key assessment would enable more in-depth measurement of the key element. This will allow the program to see the full depth and breadth of the standards and how well the candidates are mastering them. Presently only 8 of the 22 key elements are assessed in more than one key assessment (Annual Report, pp. 14-16).

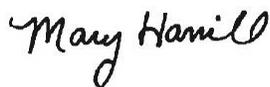
3. As the program transitions to the 2021 standards, it should consider revising the key assessments to include more opportunities for the candidates to **apply** what they know and understand. This will help candidates meet the full know - understand – do continuum of the standards. Presently, several key assessments are founded on scenarios and hypothetical situations that require candidates to deliver *on paper* what they would do in such a situation, instead of actually demonstrating this action with children, families, and/or community partners. For example, Key Assessment 1 uses vignettes which require candidates to *identify approaches* to connect with the hypothetical family (2c), explain multiple assessments and how *they might be used* (3c), and describe a possible ethical dilemma *that might arise* (6b) (Annual Report, pp. 41-46). Key Assessment 3 is based on scenarios in which candidates create a Family Letter and PowerPoint presentation about the role of assessment in the early childhood environment; this shows what the candidate knows and understands about observation and assessment but does not require them to actually observe or assess a child (Annual Report, pp. 52-60). Key Assessment 5 uses a hypothetical advocacy plan to measure 6e: the instructions stipulate that candidate are not expected to implement it; therefore, the candidate is not *demonstrating* informed advocacy for the children and the profession (Annual Report, pp. 67-72).
4. The rubric for Key Assessment 4 does not use explicit details about what candidates need to do in each area to help distinguish levels of performance. Although this was noted in the Commission’s response to the program’s first Annual Report, the program condensed the rubric criteria, making this harder to understand. For example, for 3b, “*knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches...*,” the “Met” column states, “Description of assessment types to inform teaching and learning with an example of technology is adequate” (Annual Report, p. 35). The assessment does not measure how or whether the candidate is actually using appropriate assessment strategies and tools.
5. Some rubrics do not assess the breadth of key elements. For example, the rubric for Key Element 2b in Key Assessment 2 assesses candidates’ understanding rather than their actual supporting and engaging families and communities (Annual Report, p. 30). The rubric for Key Element 3d in Key Assessment 3 does not address assessment partnerships (Annual Report, p. 34). The rubric for Key Element 4c in Key Assessment 4 assesses knowledge, but not the use of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches (Annual Report, p. 36). The program should consider reviewing all rubrics to ensure that the breadth of each key competency is reflected in the instructions and rubric.
6. The recently adopted NAEYC standards require six key assessments. As revisions are made to the assessments, the program should consider adding a sixth key assessment sooner rather than later in the accreditation cycle, with sufficient time to collect data from the new key assessment in preparation for its next accreditation review.

As announced earlier this spring, the accreditation system is shifting to programs submitting Interim Reports rather than Annual Reports as part of the requirements for maintaining accreditation. To learn more, please see page 33 of the [Accreditation Handbook](#). (Please note that annual fees continue to be due each year.)

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. Per this timeline, our records indicate that your programs should plan to submit a Year 4 Interim Report by September 30, 2023, prior to submitting a renewal Self-Study Report by November 30, 2025. **Programs submitting renewal Self-Study Reports in 2023 and beyond are required to use the [2021 higher education accreditation standards](#) (which includes an expectation that programs' curriculum will be aligned to the [Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](#)); we encourage you to review the materials in the Accreditation Resource Library and to begin transitioning to the Professional Standards and Competencies in upcoming reports. To maximize opportunities for feedback and technical assistance, programs are strongly encouraged to transition to the 2021 standards prior to submitting their Year 4 Interim Reports.**

Congratulations on your program's continued accreditation. We encourage you 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Harrill".

Mary Harrill  
Senior Director  
Higher Education Accreditation & Program Support

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Murray".

Bridget Murray  
Past Commission Chair