

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – YEAR FOURTEEN  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2017**

**WARDLAW 274-N  
1:15-3:15**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: BRITTANY ASHLEY, KATIE BARBER, JODY DAVIDSON, TRIA GRANT, TOMMY HODGES, JONATHAN OHRT, LISA PETERSON, DOYLE STEVICK, CINDY VAN BUREN, CRAIG WHEATLEY, REGINA WRAGG**

- I. Introductions & Call Meeting to Order – Doyle Stevick  
Dr. Stevick called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.
- II. Welcome and Approval of Minutes  
Ms. Davidson moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Wragg seconded her motion. The minutes were subsequently approved.
- III. Review of Office of Program Evaluation – Tammiee Dickenson (1:30)  
Dr. Dickenson gave an overview of the Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) with a corresponding PowerPoint.

OPE Mission Statement: The OPE's mission is to improve education policy and practice in the US, southeast region, and SC.

OPE Funding:

- Reports to the COE Dean's Office
- Primarily funded by grants & contracts
- Clients include SCD, SC school districts, USC faculty members, public libraries
- Funding from federal, state, & foundation sources
- Current budget of \$2.3 million

OPE Services:

- Research design
- Formative and summative evaluation
- Monitor program implementation - rubrics, instrument selection/development, etc.
- Data collection/analysis

Sample OPE Projects

- External evaluation projects:
  - Evaluation of a state program targeting early literacy for students with disabilities - working with the SDE Office of Exceptional Children
- Research Partnerships

- Experimental design for a validity study of a child care quality tool

#### Current OPE Staffing

- Research Faculty Members
- Staff Research Associates - many came within the last few months,
- Graduate Research Assistants
- Administrative Coordinator/Grants Manager

#### Project Management Structure

- Faculty members serve as project PIs
- Work in a team environment, collaborate with faculty outside of OPE

#### Collaborative Approach

- With our Clients
  - Obtain input on data collection tools
  - Share results for continuous program improvement
- In our Research Teams
  - Discuss development of data collection tools
  - Collaborate on data analysis
  - Usually have project meetings to discuss

#### Staff Evaluation and Development

- OPE faculty participate in Annual Performance Review process of affiliated departments
- Staff Research Associates engage in an EPMS-like process (are not required to complete EPMS, but we have planning stage, share duties/expectations, provide feedback mid-year and end of each year, give continuous feedback along the way)
- Graduate Research Assistants receive annual feedback and discuss growth opportunities
- All staff members engage in professional development (meetings, PD sessions)
- Grants Manager just completed Grant training with university

#### Continuous Improvement

- OPE Meetings are held with core staff members
- Conducted a SWOT (With Dean Pedersen)

#### Strengths

- OPE has reputation of high quality work in SC
- Diverse staff in terms of interests, talents, experiences, and background
- Financially stable with external funding
- Good office infrastructure
- Development of on-boarding documentation

#### Weaknesses

- Transition in office staffing

- Lack of internal capacity for communications and graphic design
- OPE hires people with research experience, so they do not have anyone with a background in web design - people are being paid for grants - lack of internal capacity for web content
- Grants Manager plays multiple roles (fiscal plus administrative support)

#### Threats

- Lack of interest in time-limited grant positions - we do tell them we will keep them on for doing a good job, but some may be wary
- Most of work outside
- Competition with other evaluation firms
- High indirect costs with university
- Some grants not requiring external evaluation
- Turnover in USC/COE Support staff, changes in leadership and economy

#### Opportunities

- Experience and reputation keeps work coming
- Additional college/university support
  - Direction under new associate dean for research (once the dean is in place can help us with innovation and connections)
  - Help with web development, communications
  - Help with grant proposal preparation
- Expansion of funding opportunities

#### OPE's State Impact

- Reading education
- ECE/school readiness
- Special Education
- Arts assessment
- Arts integration research

#### Concluding Remarks

- The OPE is a successful research unit within the COE
- Addresses emerging state needs through contracts
- Contributes to national recognition of OCE through research

#### Questions:

Dr. Hodges asked what the office would want out of the Associate Dean for Research. Dr. Dickenson replied that they would prefer someone that can set the vision, someone that has had a leadership role in research, has experience with research, someone that brings big ideas to the table, and someone that she can easily talk with about these projects.

Dr. Hodges then asked: What relationship does the Grants Manager have with the Grants &

Contracts office? Dr. Dickenson replied that she goes in and ensures people are getting paid of the correct accounts, troubleshooting, resolves any issues with processing.

Dr. Wragg asked: What feedback would you like from QCom? What would be most beneficial for you? Dr. Dickenson: Helping to make others aware in the college of some of the needs that the office has. The web development piece (more support would be helpful) - talk with them about what they would like to see on our website. Communicate with us on other areas that their staff may not have the skills to do.

Dr. Ohrt asked: From a faculty perspective, what does collaboration look like on your end? Dr. Dickenson: If faculty has ideas for a grant proposal that requires an evaluator, their office could play that role. Could help with data analysis plans that faculty may have.

Dr. Stevick asked: How deep is the threat of losing federal funding? Dr. Dickenson: That would be a deep threat. The office would have to regroup and find another source for funding. As a core staff, they would have to talk about that ...there may be different foundation sources that they could possibly look into.

Doyle Stevick then asked: How stable is the work that you do? If you are working with school districts, does it tend to be the same school districts or are you always getting new things? His outside impression is the sources of work seem pretty stable. Is that fair? Dr. Dickenson: Yes, Special Education definitely keeps them busy. Through the work that they do with the Race to the Top Initiative, they are making connections with more districts, so possibly this will bring more. Dr. Stevick then asked: Would you like to expand? Dr. Dickenson replied that she would like to have more projects and she is comfortable with that...partnering with faculty members would be attractive.

Dr. Barber asked: How do school districts and others know of the office's services that are not repeat customers? What is your outreach to districts? Dr. Dickenson replied that OPE does not do outright marketing, which is something that they could use support on. They do present at conferences, but most of their clientele are people that they have worked with previously or from recommendations.

#### IV. Review of SC Educational Policy Center – Diane Monrad (2:00)

Dr. Monrad gave an overview of the SC Educational Policy Center (SCEPC) with a corresponding handout. In contrast to OPE, Dr. Monrad has a much smaller office. SCEPC consists of just her and two graduate assistants. They work with a variety of faculty on various projects. The mission of the SCEPC is to improve education for the state's students by conducting research and providing research-based information to inform educational decision making at all levels.

Goals: Very similar to OPE's. They do not make specific recommendations on what any specific group should do, but give options.

- To conduct and disseminate high quality research to South Carolina's educators and policymakers to support school improvement and increases in student achievement

- To provide exceptional research-based training and professional development to COE graduate students and education personnel at the state, district, and school level
- To establish collaborative relationships with districts and schools that support dissemination of research-based practices, rigorous field trials of promising models, and evaluation of research-based models in collaboration with other state educational partners
- To develop broad-based partnerships with state agencies, legislative staff, districts and schools, educational organizations, and businesses to foster student achievement and student opportunities for success

As a research office, the SCEPC provides the majority of financial supports through external funds and does not receive specific COE funds for operational costs. The policies and structures provided through the COE and the Office of Grants and Contracts have been supportive in helping the SCEPC to achieve their goals. The growth and development of the SCEPC has historically been based on the success of our search for external funds. The future growth will be dependent on the interest of faculty and students in getting involved with applied research. With the future appointment of an Associate Dean for Research, she is looking forward to hearing plans for coordinating the research initiatives of the college across departments and offices.

#### Projects

- SCEPC has been working with priority schools...the most challenged schools in the state...it is not something that you have to charge for...Dr. Monrad does a lot of pro-bono work. She was a writer on the Race to the Top proposal and was very proud when it got funded. The office has also been working with school climate when not working on other projects.
- Dr. Monrad collaborated over a 5 year period with the state on the current principal evaluation system. She is working closely with Dr. Chris Distefano on climate data - always eager to help junior faculty. Working with Dr. Tran on a project with CEP on recruiting teachers in low performing schools. The office is there as a resource for the college.

Dr. Monrad highlighted the amount of work that her office does with professional training for graduate assistants. Typically she has 4 graduate assistants working - working with clients, conducting research, writing research, qualitative/quantitative research, understanding policy, working with various faculty on various projects, etc.

The office works with a lot of core people, but also get new people often. Priority Schools change, so they often work with different school districts - also work with Focus Schools (schools with large achievement gap) – they do not have to do a lot of competitive work, but word of mouth and moving districts/positions throughout the state keeps them busy.

Dr. Monrad commented that she would like QCom to consider including their publications in the Blueprint Dashboard information - not having clinical and faculty research with students is a

shortcoming. Consider recommending creating a Dashboard for Supporting Graduate students in moving forward with their research. Consider providing incentives for faculty that work with students and get those presentations and research out. Their office works with students 24/7, but that is not universal around the college. She also noted that her office knows nothing about web and get emails constantly on how to fix website, but she needs a lot of help with that. Dr. Van Buren recommend that she contact Phillippe St. Gerard and plan a sit down meeting with him to discuss the website. Dr. Wragg commented that she was shocked that the information from downstairs was not included in the Dashboard numbers. Dr. Monrad added that research and clinical faculty are usually excluded.

#### Questions & Comments:

Dr. Barber asked: Could all of this change if the Associate Dean for Research has a new vision? Dr. Monrad replied that they do not expect for anyone to come in with a vision and change everything, but they all plan to have conversations to discuss a shared vision.

Dr. Van Buren commented that when Dr. Zais was State Superintendent, the state used Dr. Monrad's data to support funding for summer loss proposal. If there is ever anything that Dr. Van Buren would like data on, she has found that Dr. Monrad and her office have usually already completed a report with that information.

Dr. Monrad commented on the impact that this has on graduate students - the research/data analysis that they completed resulted in thousands of students receiving books throughout the state- shows the impact of research/data analysis. This pushes second year students on up to initiate their own presentations/proposals. Having celebrations for students and faculty that put this information out is important.

Dr. Stevick commented that one best kept secret of this office is the work that they do with graduate students. Dr. Monrad added that the Graduate Assistant starting salary in the office is \$25K.

#### V. Review of School Improvement Council – Tom Hudson (2:30)

Mr. Hudson gave an overview of the School Improvement Council (SIC) with corresponding handouts. Mr. Hudson has been with the office for 10 years, 2 as executive director. The staff of 3 people is the most valuable resource- 63% of budget is staff because the human capital is the most valuable - staff goes through EPMS process - in addition to that, he gives ongoing feedback.

School Improvement Councils have been around in SC for over 40 years. There was no state office per say created and no funds provided for SIC since it was an unfunded state mandate. USC faculty said that there needed to be a SIC. USC's is the only one that Mr. Hudson is aware of that is housed in a College of Education instead of a State Department of Education which he is very thankful for.

They work with 1200 SICs across the state and nearly 14,000 SIC members. With budget and limitations, have to be very novel in their approaches. Train the Trainer model is used throughout the state.

As SICs are changing, someone will drop off, others will join, and so there is always turnover and others that need to be trained. SICs are all about relationships. Look at Asset mapping- what do you have, who do you know, and what do you need? Most of the people on School Improvement Councils do not have a background in that planning. They have trainings for SIC members on tools and training that they need to help support the future and the lives of their individual schools and students.

Mr. Hudson added that they have travelled to several colleges (CofC, USC Upstate, USC Sumter, etc.) and presented to classes on what SICs are and what they are intended to do. Teachers are a very valuable part of SICs. Tom requests that the USC COE allow these presentations in some of their courses.

Dr. Stevick suggested that Mr. Hudson request a meeting with the Program Chair of Educational Administration - every future principal that graduates should know what the points are of SIC. It is written into state law that every COE provide information to their teacher candidates on SICs.

#### Questions & Comments:

Dr. Barber commented that the SIC training is exceptional. The issue that she has in the districts is transient parents with SIC - sustainability with efforts. Mr. Hudson replied that he has strategies and resources that can help with parent sustainability and he recommended that Dr. Barber email him to work with this district.

Dr. Stevick said that he believes Mr. Hudson should pre-structure a presentation to the chair of Educational Administration programs - videos are there to supplement their training offerings.

Mr. Wheatley commented that he served on a SIC when he was in middle school - looking at the school he teaches at now, no one knew the SIC existed – after looking through the SIC materials, it appears that state law requires this. Mr. Hudson said that SIC is not a requirement, but would certainly be looked at for achieving Palmetto's Finest or a Blue Ribbon award. Mr. Hudson added that there is no SIC police, but as part of their website, they have a member network. Members must report to his office every year by Nov. 15th - this member network is an accountability tool - a method by which a designee at the school enters the information of all SIC members, who they are, how they got on council, contact info, etc for their office to include - also on this member network a "Read Only" function. Anyone can access this, but it does not include contact information.

Dr. Wragg asked: Who presents this “read only” data for each school? Mr. Hudson replied that essentially the user name and password is issued to each district designee. It is either the principal or someone in the front office. In some districts, the SIC contact does this for all schools. After the elections and election of officers, they input this data by Nov. 15th and it goes live each year.

SIC does a number of things - they are not tied to any particular political association with SDE - although they work well with SDE and have a good working relationship, they have a degree of autonomy being housed in a College of Education. This gives a certain level of authority to work with people at a school level since you are not considered someone coming in from the government. SIC is here to educate. Mr. Hudson considers himself a non-traditional educator - would love for the office to grow - has asked for \$50K additional for growth and work with Priority Schools and SICs.

Dr. Stevick said that the contrast in the 3 offices are SCEPC and OPE are closely faculty relationship based - what would you need to feel fully tied to faculty? Mr. Hudson replied that a step forward would be to have that access to the classroom to let those teachers and principals know the ins and outs of a SIC - equip them with this knowledge - a great step to integrating within the college.

Dr. Van Buren commented that when she was hired, she was named Director of CEP - it is 5 groups put together really for financial reasons - after the self-study is submitted, she wants to focus more attention to these offices - there is so much more they could do if the director was more involved with these offices.

## VI. Committee Consensus on Offices

### OPE

#### Strengths:

- OPE has reputation of high quality work in SC
- Diverse staff in terms of interests, talents, experiences, and background
- Financially stable with external funding and multiple projects
- Strong leadership with excellent office infrastructure. The OPE Director manages all office operations, including personnel, budget, and logistics while also leading a sub-set of projects.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Lack of internal capacity for communications, graphic design, and website content
- Although work is promoted through presentations at conferences, OPE does not currently market their office's services and rely mostly on repeat customers and their recommendations. Others that could benefit from their services may not be aware of the support available.

#### Recommendations:

- Contact Kathryn McPhail and Phillippe St. Gerard in the Office of Communications to set up a meeting regarding communications, graphic design, and website structure.
- Work with Doyle Stevick and Dean Pedersen in arranging a plan for how to make others in the college aware of some of the needs that the office has.

#### SCEPC:

##### Strengths:

- The SCEPC has conducted studies and evaluations on important aspects of K-12 schooling and has gained a reputation among state education policymakers for providing high quality research that is valuable in developing new initiatives for school improvement or evaluating current improvement strategies.
- The professional training that is offered by the office to graduate students and the successful projects that these students in turn complete, such as the research/data analysis that resulted in thousands of students receiving books throughout the state.

##### Areas for Improvement:

- As a research office, the SCEPC provides the majority of financial supports through external funds and does not receive specific COE funds for operational costs. As a result, the office may not have stable funding for graduate students.

##### Recommendations:

- Work with Doyle Stevick and Dean Pedersen in arranging for the research productivity of the SCEPC to be possibly be included as part of the dashboard indicators for the COE blueprint along with the addition of a dashboard indicator that reflects the productivity of the college's graduate students.

#### SIC:

##### Strengths:

- SIC is very proactive and has a reputation of responding to state-wide needs even if it is not necessarily their expertise.
- The staff of three, which accounts for 63% of the office's budget, works with an astounding number of people throughout the state—1,200 SICs and nearly 14,000 SIC members.
- The SIC training model and materials are regarded as exceptional throughout the state.

##### Areas for Improvement:

- With budget and limitations, SIC has to be very novel in their training and outreach approaches.
- Outreach to USC classrooms—although the office has travelled to several colleges throughout the state, does not currently have a presence in USC classrooms.

##### Recommendations:

- Pre-structure a classroom presentation on SICs to the Department Chair of Educational Administration programs and arrange a meeting since every future principal that graduates should know the key points of a SIC.

## VII. Schedule for Future Meetings

- SC Geographic Alliance / SC Middle School Association / Writing Improvement Network – February 2017
- Grants & Contracts – March 2017
- Conferences – March 2017
- Office of Student Services – April 2017
- Office of Assessment & Accreditation – April 2017
- Instructional Support & Facilities – May 2017

VIII. Adjournment

Dr. Stevick adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.