



# University of Colorado Boulder

2022 Program Review

School of Education

Academic Review and Planning Advisory  
Committee Report

Approved

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## Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the School of Education (SOE) was conducted in accordance with the 2022 program review guidelines. Self-study responses were prepared by the unit and checked by two ARPAC members specifically assigned as liaisons to the unit, as part of the discovery process. The ARPAC unit liaisons submitted a summary of findings derived from the self-study and from interviews and/or surveys with faculty, staff, and student unit members. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of two experts from outside of the University of Colorado Boulder, engaged in a virtual visit and submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and meetings with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. ARPAC staff, employing web conferencing tools, facilitated the external review as a remote visit over April 28 and 29, 2022. ARPAC reviewed and considered these materials, met with the dean, and wrote this report. Discovery process summary and external reviewer comments and recommendations are shared when relevant throughout this report.

## Past Reviews

During the previous ARPAC (2014) review, the SOE was recommended to: 1) assess the graduate program's size and increase mentorship focused on helping graduate students gain external funding; 2) justify growth in MA programs and clarify MA revenue-sharing arrangements; 3) explore new faculty hires, evaluate the faculty mentoring program, and renew efforts to increase both faculty and student diversity; 4) strengthen the teacher licensure program, including connections to SOE-taught undergraduate courses; 5) cultivate staff expertise in educational computing and technology; 6) address space and facilities issues; and finally, 7) build on prior fundraising efforts.

ARPAC congratulates the SOE for having addressed these recommendations by: 1) guaranteeing funding packages that increased from three to five years for all admitted PhD students and better mentoring graduate students in seeking external funding; 2) adding new positions, including a director and assistant director of admissions and a director of diverse student recruitment and retention, all of which led to increased numbers of applicants, including underrepresented<sup>1</sup> minorities; 3) increasing the diversity of doctoral students (with 67% of the 2021 class identifying as students of color or belonging to a historically underrepresented population); 4) increasing faculty member representativeness, with 15 out of 36 tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty members identifying as people of color in 2020; 5) adding an associate dean for faculty position and restructuring feedback for pre-tenure faculty mentoring; 6) securing regent approval for two new undergraduate degrees and two new MA programs; and 7) renovating the Fleming building. The SOE decided against hiring an educational technology specialist.

## Unit Overview and Analysis

The campus' standardized description of the SOE is available on the website of the Office of Data Analytics (ODA) at <https://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-planning>. ODA updates the profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites data posted in October 2021, reflecting the state of the SOE as of the academic year (AY) 2020-2021. Additional information obtained from the unit self-study, the ARPAC discovery process, and the external review report is also cited where relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> ARPAC notes that it can sometimes be complicated to have consistent, shared terminology for protected class identity groups. In the context of this report, we use the term "underrepresented" to refer to individuals or groups that have been historically marginalized or minoritized within U.S. higher education. Although national data sources often use the term "underrepresented minority (URM)" to combine people who are Black, Latine, and Native American, ARPAC acknowledges that the term "minority" is contested and diminishing.

## Disciplinary Context

The CU Boulder School of Education (SOE) is a nationally recognized innovator in education with a leadership role in several areas of educational research, policy, and practice. With a mission grounded in a commitment to democracy, diversity, equity, and justice, the school intends to make a substantive difference in educational access and contribute to evidence-based research, policy, and practice. The school trains its graduates to become engaged and informed educators, researchers, policymakers, and community leaders.

While the SOE's faculty and researchers publish in highly recognized scholarly journals, they also make their work accessible to wider audiences with the goal of influencing education policy and practice. Faculty from the SOE are often called upon to participate in national conversations to develop new policies and areas of research that have a significant impact on the direction of the educational landscape.

In particular, SOE faculty are leaders in developing, promoting, and using research methodologies such as quantitative methods, humanities-based approaches, research-practice partnerships (RPPs), community-based participatory research (CBPR), collaborative classroom-based research, practitioner research, and design-based implementation research (DBIR).

According to the external reviewers, the SOE “stands out as one of the leading schools of education in the nation. Faculty are well known in their fields of study, attract grants and contracts, win prestigious awards, and publish in top venues. The positive reputation has helped the SOE attract high-quality faculty, staff, and students. Graduates are highly regarded and compete well for academic jobs and K-12 teaching positions.”

## Research and Scholarship

SOE scholars conduct research focused on school equity and on interdisciplinary learning. They explore foundational ideas that ground current policies and practices, such as diversifying the teacher workforce, and examine the relationships among identity, culture, race, learning, power, and how teacher and student learning may be assessed at national and state levels.

The school's principal program areas are:

- Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice
- Equity, Bilingualism, and Biliteracy
- Learning Sciences and Human Development
- Literacy Studies
- Research and Evaluation Methodology
- STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) Education
- Teacher Learning, Research and Practice

Faculty across these program areas also participate in the SOE's four university-approved centers: the BUENO Center for Multicultural Education (BUENO), the National Educational Policy Center (NEPC), the Center for Assessment, Design, Research, and Evaluation (CADRE), and CU Engage. The school established the last two of these centers since the 2014 ARPAC review.

SOE faculty members have distinguished themselves with nationally recognized accomplishments since the 2014 review. These include book awards from the Society for Research on Adolescence, the American Library Association, and the Council on Anthropology and Education of the American

Anthropological Association as well as recognition for scholarly articles, including the International Literacy Association's Dina Feitelson Award for Research. Working with collaborators across campus and at other universities, a number of SOE faculty members won a five-year \$20 million multidisciplinary National Science Foundation AI Institute grant. The collaborative efforts of a SOE faculty member on the Stanford Education Data Archive were recognized by an NCME Annual Award for Exceptional Achievement in Educational Measurement and an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Award for Significant Contribution to Educational Measurement and Research Methodology, and another of the school's faculty members received an early career award from the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for Social Studies. Finally, a SOE faculty member won the Hazel Barnes Prize, CU Boulder's most prestigious faculty award for research and teaching.

In the latest U.S. News and World Report rankings, the SOE doctoral program ranked 34<sup>th</sup> out of 277 programs surveyed; this included ranking among the top 20 PhD programs at public institutions, and 12<sup>th</sup> overall in education policy. In a measure of scholarly impact comparing the combined citation rates of faculty in over 200 education programs, Academic Analytics placed the SOE above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile between 2014-2020, and at the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile in education among 34 AAU public universities between 2017-2020 (the only years available).

Scholarly output tracked by the Office of Data Analytics since the 2014 review shows the following rates for SOE faculty members:

- Refereed books and monographs: 0.5 per year (ranking SOE faculty member output in this category 26<sup>th</sup> out of 58 CU Boulder academic units)
- Textbooks: 0.1/yr (6<sup>th</sup> out of 29 comparable CU Boulder academic units)
- Edited books: 0.4/yr (14<sup>th</sup> out of 48 units)
- Refereed articles and chapters: 12.4/yr (38<sup>th</sup> of 65 units)
- Conference presentations and papers: 25.0/yr (34<sup>th</sup> out of 65 units)
- Creative works: 0.3/yr (32<sup>nd</sup> out of 49 units)

SOE faculty stand out among national peers and specifically AAU public university peers in receiving federal grants (most specifically, in federal grants per faculty and federal money per grant). Between 2014-2022, SOE faculty and staff members worked on a total of 203 externally funded projects totaling over \$87 million in awards (\$61 million of which were direct CU expenditures). Granting agencies include federal organizations (primarily the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences), non-profit foundations (e.g., the Spencer Foundation, W.T. Grant Foundation, and Stuart Foundation), state entities (e.g., the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Higher Education), and public school districts (e.g., Denver Public Schools and Poudre Valley Public Schools). According to historical data compiled by the Office of Contracts and Grants and the Office of Data Analytics, SOE faculty applied for an average of 47 grants per year from FY2014 to FY2020, which was an increase from the prior review period (FY2007 to FY2013) when they applied for an average of 32 grants per year.

SOE faculty have been elected to important leadership roles in professional organizations within their field, including the American Educational Research Association, the International Society of the Learning Sciences, the Literacy Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. In addition, they have been selected to serve on prominent advisory boards and panels, including the Board on Science Education of the National Academies and the National Academy of Education.

## Collaborations

SOE faculty members participate in cross-area and cross-disciplinary research that fosters innovative collaborations, including with scholars in the departments of Computer Science, Theatre and Dance, Mathematics, and Information Science, among others. A recent example of the success of these collaborative ties is the previously mentioned NSF-funded (\$20 million) Institute for Student-AI Teaming, which brings artificial intelligence into classroom contexts to promote student learning engagement and opens opportunities to critically assess algorithmic justice.

SOE faculty members also foster collaborations outside of CU Boulder, such as with public organizations, community entities, and K-12 schools. Several SOE faculty have been recognized in recent years for their contributions to public scholarship, community-engaged scholarship, and work to further educational equity. Examples include:

- The American Educational Research Association Scholars of Color in Education Award for distinguished Career Contribution to Education Research
- The AERA Outstanding Public Communication of Education Research Award
- The University of Colorado Chase Community Service Award, presented annually to a University of Colorado System-wide faculty member who provides exceptional community service
- The University of Colorado President's Diversity Award, recognizing significant achievements of faculty, staff, students, and academic or administrative units across the University of Colorado System in developing a culturally and intellectually diverse university community reflective of inclusive excellence (received twice)
- The AERA Distinguished Contributions to Gender Equity in Education Research Award

## Campus Context

The SOE offers two undergraduate majors (Elementary Education; Leadership and Community Engagement), two minors (Education; Leadership Studies), a certificate in STEM Education, and seven undergraduate teacher licensure programs (K-12 Music Education [in partnership with the College of Music]; Middle School Mathematics; Secondary English Language Arts; Secondary Mathematics; Secondary Science; Secondary Social Studies; and Secondary World Languages). The SOE structures its undergraduate degree programs so that its students receive a good deal of their education outside the school.

The SOE offers seven master's degrees and one doctoral degree with seven sub-plans. The school's graduate credentialing is less dependent on other CU-Boulder schools and colleges than are its undergraduate programs.

Several other SOE programs make visible contributions to the university. For instance, the Learning Assistant (LA) Program brings undergraduates who have gone through a rigorous application and training program into courses across the campus to change classroom cultures to become more student-centered, collaborative, and accessible. The self-study reports that currently, approximately 450 learning assistants are engaged in 20 departments and 80 courses per year. A Queer Endeavor (AQE), founded in 2014, works with educators to create schools that are safer for and more affirming of LGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive youth. In addition to developing courses, AQE leads summer institutes that over 500 educators attended in 2021; the program works with over 10,000 public school educators and administrators.

The SOE was a leader at CU Boulder in responding rapidly and creatively to the educational shifts necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledging that a change to online teaching might

compound existing educational inequities, SOE faculty members and graduate students developed the Buffs for Frontline Service Employees (Buffs4FLSE) Program to support the children and grandchildren of CU's lowest-paid employees with tutoring and enrichment services, as well as parental support. Meeting in three groups over the summer of 2020, SOE faculty and staff members developed innovative pedagogical methods and led university-wide conversations about online pedagogy, including by working with LA program undergraduates to disperse research-informed ideas about online teaching to faculty across campus.

## Strategic Vision and Planning

In 2017, the SOE, led by the strategic planning committee, adopted a values and purpose statement and a preliminary vision statement:

### **Values and Purpose Statement**

The School of Education is grounded in a lived commitment to democracy, diversity, equity, and justice. The work of our faculty, researchers, staff, and students contributes to evidence-based policy and practice. Our graduates are courageous leaders who challenge, inspire, educate, and work toward a more just and humane world.

### **Vision Statement**

As a public school of education, our faculty and staff center students, educators, and community members in our work. Our teaching, research, and partnerships advance just and equitable educational opportunities, policies, and practices. We are learners and scholars who collectively strive to build a dignity-affirming, radically inclusive, and flourishing society.

The SOE has also forwarded a number of goals during the current review period, as noted in the self-study, and as described in the separate sections of this report. A planned formal year-long strategic planning process, however, was delayed due to the pandemic and is in progress in AY 2022-23. During this process, the SOE expects to formulate its mission, goals, and metrics for the next five-seven years. ARPAC encourages the completion of a strategic plan that incorporates the recommendations of this ARPAC review cycle and that builds on recent SOE accomplishments.

## Governance

Since the last ARPAC review, the SOE has done considerable work to update its governance documents and institute necessary new policies. In 2017, the school revised its reappointment, promotion and tenure (RPT) guidelines for the first time since 1983. The SOE also formalized a student grievance policy in 2018. In 2021, the school developed a new faculty grievance policy and updated its by-laws to reflect significant leadership structure changes. Among these was the addition of an associate dean for diversity, equity, and community engagement position, a new faculty chair role, updated standing committees rules, the addition of an undergraduate programs section, and new salary increase and equity evaluation policies and procedures.

The school included the following files with its self-study as references for ARPAC: the unit's organizational chart; bylaws; annual merit review processes and guidelines for salary increases; primary unit evaluation criteria for reappointment, comprehensive, promotion, and tenure reviews (for both tenure-track and instructor-track faculty); student and faculty grievance policies; and the SOE's inclusive excellence narrative.



The leaders in the SOE are organized into several overlapping groups. A school leadership team meets weekly for two hours and is composed of the dean, associate deans, and the special projects, and budget, strategic planning, and administration directors. The dean's advisory committee meets monthly and is composed of the dean, the faculty-elected faculty chair, the associate deans, the program chairs, the teacher education, special projects, and budget, strategic planning, and administration directors. The management team, composed of the dean and directors of each administrative unit (e.g., communications, admissions, advancement), meets once a month.

All SOE faculty members, including instructors and researchers (who now have some voting privileges) meet monthly, as do staff members. Beginning in 2017, the SOE instituted a semesterly "all hands" meeting, which includes all faculty, staff, and doctoral students; between 100 and 150 people attend. This is one of several changes aimed at creating a more inclusive and collaborative culture across roles and employment categories, especially to overcome a historical hierarchy and divide between faculty and staff.

While the SOE bylaws specify faculty hiring voting rights, the bylaws do not spell out how to constitute hiring committees, or how to conduct votes.

The SOE bylaws define primary unit reappointment, promotion and tenure review committees as consisting of three tenured faculty members appointed by the dean in concurrence with the faculty member under review, taking into consideration the faculty member's area of expertise and rank. The committees are tasked with evaluating cases and making recommendations to the dean regarding tenure, reappointment, and promotion decisions. The dean also relies on a dean's advisory committee consisting of three non-SOE faculty members to advise on faculty personnel cases.

The school specifies its instructor-track (i.e., teaching professor) reappointment and promotion procedures in a memo dated November 24, 2015. This memo should be updated in line with changes to the Academic Affairs "Titles, Roles, Appointment, Evaluation and Promotion of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty in Teaching and Librarian Positions" policy.

The school's faculty mentoring program consists of mentor/mentee matching, regular mentor/mentee meetings, and mentee-only reflective and learning spaces. In recent years, the school's associate dean of faculty has conducted regular meetings of associate professors, postdoctoral scholars, and teaching faculty to better support the needs of personnel with these different roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the SOE has introduced initiatives to support the retention of assistant professors and, in particular, to better support faculty members who identify as belonging to historically underrepresented populations. ARPAC is especially pleased to see the SOE's efforts to better support the mentoring needs of untenured faculty members, and to significantly revise the school's reappointment, promotion and tenure procedures.

The school's four-member merit review committee includes three members elected from among tenured associate and full professors, who serve three-year staggered terms and one member who is elected from among assistant professors for a two-year term. All tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote for all four committee members. The committee advises the dean on TTT faculty salary increases, salary-affecting policies, and on post-tenure review cases.

In a bylaws appendix, the SOE spells out a process for the annual evaluation of faculty salary equity, and for the resolution of salary equity appeals. ARPAC is impressed that the school's salary procedures revisions are thoughtful and detailed.

The school designed its faculty grievance policy to build on CU Boulder's Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members document, which covers both tenured and tenure-track and instructor track faculty members. An accompanying student grievance procedure provides a structure for resolving disputes between SOE students and faculty or staff as well as student disciplinary procedures.

ARPAC assesses that the SOE has done excellent work to update or amend its self-governance procedures since the last review.

## Inclusive Excellence

Since 2016, the SOE has significantly increased the racial and ethnic diversity of its faculty, students, and staff.

The SOE has undertaken a concerted effort to hire faculty of color over the past few years. According to the ODA profile, in AY 2021-2022, 37% of tenured and tenure-track faculty members were non-white and 34% were members of an underrepresented race/ethnicity group. This represents an increase from the 2017 profile, when 24.3% of TTT faculty identified as BIPOC (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander). The self-study, submitted at the end of the fall 2021 semester, reports that 41% of the TTT faculty members are scholars of color.

According to the ODA profile, in AY 2021-2022, 35% of graduate students were non-white and 32% were members of an underrepresented race/ethnicity group. This represents an increase from the profile of five years earlier, when 31% of graduate students were non-white and 28% were members of an underrepresented race/ethnicity group. The self-study reports that the entering class of AY 2021-22 included 69% of doctoral students and 43% of master's students who are students of color; 50% of the incoming doctoral class identified as first-generation students.

The ODA profile for AY 2021-22 shows that 26% of undergraduate students were non-white and 21% were members of an underrepresented race/ethnicity group; these percentages were at about the campus average. This represents a significant increase from the profile of five years earlier, when 15% of SOE undergraduate students were non-white and 9% were members of an underrepresented race/ethnicity group.

ODA does not report unit staff demographics. However, the self-study reports that in the past three years, 69% of newly hired SOE staff members have been people of color, and that 46% of the entire staff identify as people of color.

The self-study details numerous efforts to recruit, retain, and support faculty, staff, and students from diverse groups. In addition to the existing Miramontes Doctoral Fellowship Program, the school in 2020 initiated the Doctoral Mentorship Pathway Program to increase doctoral student diversity. (In 2022, 67% of SOE doctoral students identified as students of color.) As previously noted, the school has updated its by-laws to add a new associate dean for diversity, equity, and community engagement position, and the school has hired a diversity recruitment and retention director.

ARPAC applauds the SOE for these efforts and looks forward to further updates.

## Unit Culture

The SOE's 2021 Campus Culture Survey results point toward significant community tensions. The self-study reports the SOE's belief that this tension is a result of the school's increased diversity and size, as well as disagreements on "what constitutes social justice work, diversity, equity, and inclusion." In 2020 the school consulted with a Center for Teaching & Learning faculty fellow to identify challenges related to communications and respect, and also consulted with the assistant vice provost for faculty relations to discuss the *Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members* document. The SOE is focusing on two primary issues: 1) addressing incivility and negative group norms, and 2) developing transparent administrative processes for faculty, staff, and students. The school created concrete plans to ameliorate these issues. Nevertheless, the external reviewers noted that the 2021 Campus Culture Survey results continue to reveal multiple areas of concern such as a "lack of trust" and persistent incivility. The external reviewers noted that the steps the SOE is taking are helpful but insufficient, as "fractured relationships need to be repaired, and trust needs to be built."

In August 2021, the faculty began developing community agreements to express how they wanted to interact with each other in meetings. They have been refining these agreements during each faculty meeting and are currently working on what to do in conversations when a norm has been broken. They have also developed a faculty grievance process for managing interpersonal challenges and are currently adapting this document to extend to staff and students.

In the summer of 2020, the SOE's graduate students demanded further action on racism. Graduate student members of the School of Education Students of Color Caucus wrote to the dean asking for curriculum, pedagogy, and policy changes. In the past year, the SOE has responded to the majority of the students' demands. For instance, the SOE has created a Graduate Student of Color Seminar; developed the aforementioned associate dean for diversity, equity, and community engagement position, which focuses on advocating for graduate students of color; and created learning opportunities for faculty to reflect on, and revise, pedagogical practices as related to racism, colonialism, and white supremacy.

The external reviewers also noted that "there is a sense [among faculty] that service is not equally carried out among faculty members. The school should systematically gather data on faculty service loads and consider whether they can be more evenly distributed. It would also be useful to examine course reductions that are provided for service, while keeping a balance between equitable support of faculty for their service and implications of course releases for the financial bottom line." ARPAC agrees with the external reviewers that the SOE would do well to address the faculty's sense of service inequity and unfair awarding of course reductions.

Overall, leadership within the SOE is working to correct these issues, but it needs to be a priority of the dean and SOE leadership to guarantee that all individuals feel safe and validated when airing concerns. The dean is also required to intervene when harm may be experienced by any member of the school community.

## Faculty and Research Personnel

According to the Office of Data Analytics (ODA) profile for AY 2020-2021, faculty and research personnel in the School of Education consisted of 37 tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty (including the dean); 16 instructor-track faculty; 24 lecturers and other instructional personnel; 31 research faculty, research associates/assistants, and other research personnel; and 44 student research assistants.

The SOE has seen significant hiring of new faculty in the current reporting period. According to the self-study, since the last ARPAC review there have been 24 new TTT faculty hires, with over 92% retention of those new hires. In the same period, a total of 18 faculty members either retired/died (11), left for another position (6), or did not receive tenure (1), resulting in a net gain of faculty for the SOE. A particular strength of the unit, as mentioned above, has been in the recruitment of pre-tenure faculty who identify as underrepresented populations. The self-study reports that recent faculty hires have added strength in two existing programs (Equity, Bilingualism, and Biliteracy and Learning Sciences and Human Development) and led to the creation of one new program area, Teacher Learning Research and Practice, “one of few such programs in the country.” New faculty members also have expertise in two academic specialties identified in the last ARPAC review, critical race theory and technology, new media, equity, and education.

The external reviewers recommend that the number of faculty members increase to keep pace with increased student enrollment. ARPAC endorses additional faculty hiring but emphasizes that it will be justified only if student enrollment increases enough to warrant it.

The external reviewers recommend that the school prioritize more competitive faculty salaries. Currently, SOE tenured and tenure-track faculty members earn less than their AAU public institution peers across all ranks: assistant professors earn only 92% of what their AAU public peers make, associate professors 88%, and full professors 84%. While the school also must confront long-standing salary compression concerns, the standing of its salary resources compared to those of the SOE's peer schools seems to be the more pressing issue. ARPAC recognizes that TTT faculty salary compression is a campus-wide issue but urges the SOE to consider how internal practices and resources might be directed toward addressing this problem.

## Undergraduate Education

The SOE taught a total of 13,603 undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) in AY 2020-2021, which constitutes a five-year increase of 39%. Of these credit hours, tenured and tenure-track faculty taught 22%; instructors, 23%; graduate part time instructors, 44%; and other categories, like lecturers, 14%. The percentage of undergraduate SCH taught by TTT faculty is low in relation to other CU Boulder academic units, with the SOE ranked 38<sup>th</sup> of 51 units in this regard. Sixty-six percent of the school's undergraduate credit hours were taken by non-majors.

### *Description of Major Degrees and Requirements*

The SOE's undergraduate programs reflect its commitment to democracy, diversity, equity, and justice. To address these commitments, the SOE developed two majors since the 2014 ARPAC review: 1) a BA in Elementary Education with a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Education Endorsement and 2) a BA in Leadership and Community Engagement. Both majors were established in 2017 and graduated their first classes in the spring of 2021. Previously, the SOE offered only a “post-baccalaureate” program in teacher licensure.

**The BA in Elementary Education (ELED)** is designed to address the growing need in Colorado and across the country for teachers who are prepared to teach bilingual students. The degree requires a total of 120 credits, which includes College of Arts and Sciences general education and MAPS requirements (41-46 credits) as well as 75 credits in three categories—Elementary Major (3 courses, 5 credits), Licensure (12 courses, 46 credits), and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Education (8 courses, 24 credits). The program threads the development of content and pedagogical knowledge through methods courses in social studies, science, mathematics, and literacy, with a focus on learning theories and the

importance of addressing social inequalities. The program qualifies graduates for Colorado licensure in elementary education with a Colorado endorsement in CLD Education.

**The BA in Leadership and Community Engagement (LDCE)** prepares ethical, skilled leaders by drawing on theories of leadership, applied research, and learning in community settings. This dual degree program requires a second degree from the College of Arts and Sciences. Students must fulfill A&S general education and MAPS requirements, as well as complete 36-37 hours of courses across five categories: education courses (5 courses, 13 credits), theoretical foundations (3 courses, 9 credits), applied research (3 courses, 9 credits), learning in community settings (1 course, 3-4 credits), and community leadership practice (2 courses, 5 credits).

Both ELED and LDCE students engage in robust coursework and fieldwork. For example, elementary education majors participate in over 1,000 hours of fieldwork in K-6 public elementary classrooms located in five partner districts. These experiences include a year-long practicum and student teaching placements in years three and four of the program, respectively. Relationships between the SOE and schools in surrounding communities are developed and supported by the Office of Field Experiences.

The Elementary Education BA began in 2017 with a cohort of 28 students; the Leadership and Community Engagement BA began that same year with a cohort of only six students. As of Fall 2020, these degree programs had 364 majors, which includes 223 in Elementary Education, 44 in Leadership and Community Engagement, and 58 in teacher licensure. In 2021, the school awarded twenty-two bachelor's degrees (17 in Elementary Education, and 44 in Leadership and Community Engagement).

The 2021 Senior Exit Survey reports that 67% of the SOE's majors are satisfied with their academic major, 80% with the overall curriculum, 58% with the quality of faculty, 75% with the quality of TA instruction, 33% on preparation for employment, 67% on preparation for the job market, and 42% with the "availability of required courses." Fifteen students responded to the survey, equivalent to a response rate of 48%.

The SOE's self-study does not mention an undergraduate honors program, internship opportunities, or student clubs.

#### *Description of Minors, Certificates, & Licensure Programs/Requirements*

The SOE offers two undergraduate minors in education and leadership studies, both designed to prepare students for a wide variety of opportunities in educational contexts. By combining the minor with a chosen field of study, undergraduates gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare them to lead in community, policymaking organizations, education, business, government, and other related contexts. As of Fall 2020, the SOE enrolled 468 minors (a five-year increase of 38%), with 101 in the education minor and 367 in the leadership studies minor.

The SOE offers licensure programs for Grades 7-12 teaching, with concentrations in English (7-12), math (7-12), middle school math (6-8), science (7-12), social studies (7-12), and world language (7-12). Students simultaneously take SOE courses while pursuing a major in another school or college. There were 58 students in these licensure programs as of Fall 2020. The SOE also offers aspects of teacher licensure in music education (K-12), but the College of Music administers that program. The SOE no longer offers teacher licensure in elementary education separately from the Elementary Education BA.

The SOE offers an undergraduate STEM education certificate in collaboration with the College of Engineering and Applied Science and the College of Arts and Sciences. The certificate focuses on creating

learning environments that support diverse perspectives in the process of solving interesting and relevant mathematical, scientific, and engineering problems. The self-study reports that eight students were enrolled in this certificate program as of Fall 2020.

### *Learning Outcomes*

The SOE has developed robust learning outcomes assessments for its majors, minor, and teacher licensure programs. The school assesses outcomes in the teacher licensure, leadership, and community engagement major, and education minor differently. For example, undergraduates in the Elementary Education BA and the teacher licensure programs need to demonstrate pedagogical expertise; establish a safe and inclusive classroom community; design lessons that emphasize the importance of diverse perspectives; understand the theoretical foundations of leadership and community engagement; examine the historical, cultural, and ideological contexts; explore theories of learning; understand disciplinary-specific approaches; and effectively communicate STEM-related concepts.

### *Curricular Planning*

The self-study made no mention of plans to change the undergraduate curriculum, instead noting the undergraduate program's four central goals:

1. Build enrollment, especially among first-generation, low-income, non-traditional, bilingual, and underrepresented students of color
2. Strengthen and further integrate school and community partnerships within its programs (e.g., K-12, nonprofit)
3. Increase and stabilize funding (e.g., funding from donors, the state, and school districts)
4. Evaluate and revise its programs to be more accessible and equitable

ARPAC assesses that the SOE's undergraduate programs are strong. Graduating seniors regard the programs highly. The school has made great efforts to improve undergraduate student diversity, to recruit undergraduate students interested in working with historically underserved communities, and to develop degrees with social justice commitments.

## Graduate Education

The School of Education offers seven master's degrees and one doctoral degree with seven sub-plans. There are pathways for both full-time and part-time master's degrees, while the doctoral program is a full-time course of study. Each of the graduate programs specifies detailed learning outcomes.

The master's degrees offered are:

- Curriculum and Instruction (with Literacy Education, Humanities Education, and Math and Science tracks)
- Educational Foundations, Policy, and Practice
- Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy (recently renamed from Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity)
- Higher Education
- Learning Sciences and Human Development
- Teacher Leadership

In addition, the SOE offers these options for master's degrees:

- A bachelor's-accelerated-master's (BAM) with the Department of Ethnic Studies
- A MA + Teacher Licensure program, which leads to a Colorado initial teacher licensure in secondary education plus a master's of arts in curriculum and instruction

The doctoral degree sub-plans are:

- Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice
- Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy
- Learning Sciences and Human Development
- Literacy Studies
- Research and Evaluation Methodology
- STEM Education
- Teacher Learning, Research and Practice

New graduate programs since the last ARPAC review include the MA in higher education, approved in 2017, and the MA in teacher leadership, an online “on-demand” program that began in August 2020. The SOE also created a graduate certificate in quantitative methods for behavioral sciences. As previously noted, the SOE recently shifted to offering one PhD program with area subplans (tracks), rather than having different PhD degrees that correspond to the different program areas. This shift was designed to better reflect the interdisciplinary nature of SOE coursework and faculty research.

With so many graduate offerings (including the master's programs), the external reviewers recommend considering program reductions. “The School has many graduate programs, and they may consider which ones may no longer serve needs or whether they could be combined. This may help reduce faculty teaching and service demands.” Even with the SOE's recent PhD program consolidation, the number of PhD subplans and master's programs might exceed capacity and/or demand. As the external reviewers note, this duplicity can cause negative externalities, including spreading faculty and students too thinly across courses, and non-tenure-track faculty having to take up core teaching work. ARPAC concurs that the SOE would be well served to shutter or combine some of its PhD subplans, and to reconsider keeping master's programs with consistently low enrollments.

A related concern about the graduate programs is the number of graduate courses taught by non-tenure-track faculty. In particular, ARPAC is troubled by the fact that in recent years, 8-11% of graduate student credit hours are taught by graduate students, either as GPTIs or TAs. A graduate class should be taught by a graduate student only in truly exceptional circumstances, in which that graduate student has professional experience equivalent to the terminal degree in the field—in the Education field, a doctoral degree. ARPAC expects the SOE to terminate this practice as soon as possible.

ODA reports that in Fall 2022, the SOE had 350 graduate students, including 258 master's students (a five-year 2% decline) and 92 doctoral students (a five-year 11% increase). In comparison to the school's pre-COVID-19 pandemic graduation levels, the SOE MA program has graduated fewer students (from 134 MA graduates in 2020, to 94 in 2021), but the PhD program has seen graduations rise (from 11 in 2011, to 17 in 2021).

SOE graduates go on to employment in the education sector, taking positions as full-time K-12 teachers (or as other school district professionals), university faculty members, full-time researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders.

Since the 2014 ARPAC review, the SOE has made a number of valuable improvements in its graduate program. As noted above in “Past Reviews,” the SOE has worked to provide doctoral students with opportunities to collaborate with research practitioners and has enhanced the doctoral funding package to cover students' tuition expenses for five years.

The self-study also reports creation of the Students of Color Caucus. In 2020, members of this organization requested changes to curriculum, pedagogies, and policies. These requests resulted in the creation of a Graduate Student of Color Seminar and the development of the new position of associate dean for diversity, equity, and community engagement.

In response to graduate students' concerns about a lack of evaluation criteria clarity, the self-study reports plans to introduce meetings dedicated to milestones and expectations, and to formally document student performance expectations.

## Postdoctoral Training

Since the last review, the SOE has supported 10 postdoctoral fellows. SOE postdoctoral fellows focus on research and scholarship with an aim toward research and/or teaching career pathways in higher education or elsewhere in the education sector. In their role as postdoctoral mentors, SOE faculty members assist in identifying common scholarly interests, develop individualized postdoctoral plans, and help with networking within and beyond the SOE, among other issues likely to impact a postdoc's professional development.

Faculty from across the school's programs and centers have worked as postdoctoral supervisors. They have included three in Learning Sciences and Human Development, two in Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy, and one each in Educational Foundations, Policy, and Practice, STEM Education, and the CADRE, NEPC, and CU Engage centers. Postdoctoral scholars have opportunities to teach and mentor both graduate and undergraduate students. Some postdocs have formal mentoring programs, and all postdocs meet regularly with their mentors. They are also invited to attend Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and Postdoctoral Association events and to participate in all facets of the SOE and campus life during their appointment.

## Staff

According to the ODA profile for AY 2020-2021, staff personnel in the School of Education consisted of 45 university staff members, four classified staff members, and 29 student hourly employees. The number of classified staff members and student hourly employees was unchanged from five years previous, but there was a 150% increase in the number of university staff members (from 18 to 45). Nonetheless, the self-study reports that the recent staff growth has not been commensurate with the growth in program areas, so the SOE feels chronically understaffed. The SOE would like to add a position to oversee its scholarship process, a task currently done by the graduate program coordinator.

The external reviewers note that although staff have been provided with pathways for promotion within the SOE, there is still work to do in terms of staff retention.

ARPAC supports increasing the number of staff if an increased student enrollment warrants it. At the same time, the SOE should consider where its staff resources might best be employed. For example, while ARPAC sympathizes with the SOE's desire to take some of the burden off its hard-working staff members, it is unclear whether a function such as scholarship oversight necessitates hiring a full-time staff member.

## Budget

According to the self-study, the SOE's income from all funding sources increased 26.4% between Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 and FY 2021. There was an almost \$5 million (77.6%) increase in general funds between FY 2014 and FY 2021, in part due to localization to each school/college of benefits from the central



benefit pool (\$3.36 million beginning in FY 2021), but also due to funding added by the campus for enrollment growth incentives (~\$860,000/year) and the design and implementation of two new MA programs (\$250,000-\$500,000/year). Auxiliary funding grew from almost \$528,000 in FY 2014 to just over \$1 million in FY 2020, but shrank dramatically in FY 2021, no doubt due to the pandemic. Funding from contracts and grants started at just over \$8 million in FY 2014, reached a peak of just over \$10 million in FY 2019, and dropped to about \$7.5 million in FY 2021.

As previously noted, faculty salaries are below market rates. Increased university funding to counter salary compression, and funding to counter staff salary inequities, would help address existing salary gaps and assist with retention. However, ARPAC believes that the SOE could address some of the problems with internal budgetary processes and resources.

During the discovery process, ARPAC noticed the creation of many new SOE administrative and staff positions, or the reclassification of old ones, to occupy a higher level in the hierarchy. The restructuring of the school administration is welcome, but we wonder if it might be causing the school unexpected budget issues. While the \$5 million budget increase from fiscal year (FY) 2014 to 2021 included increases in the amount of dollars spent in four out of five budgetary categories (faculty salary, staff salary, faculty/staff benefits, student support), there seems to have been percentage drops in the budget allocated to pay faculty salaries (from 40.97% to 35.90%) and student support (from 22.46% to 21.81%). Meanwhile, the budget for staff salaries saw an increase from 6.64% of the total budget to 13.37% between FY 2014 and FY 2021, while the budget for faculty and staff benefits also increased from 5.70% to 15.76% of the total in the same period.

In the discovery process, ARPAC encouraged the SOE to review the allocations of the increasing budget, since it appeared that at a percentage level, they are spending less on improving faculty salaries and supporting students, even though the total dollars spent on these areas is now larger. The creation of many administrative and staff positions with higher salaries may have distorted the budget.

In its response, the SOE replied to ARPAC's concern explaining that unfortunately, the proportions of the overall budget reported in its graphs were distorted by the massive difference in faculty and staff benefits caused by the university localizing benefits budgets to individual units from the central benefits pool beginning in FY 2021. Therefore, to gain an appropriate comparison between FY 2021 and FY 2014, it was important to exclude faculty and staff benefits. The school presented a new table in its reply excluding the distorting benefits numbers that showed that faculty salaries in the overall budget was 43% in FY 2014 and remains 43% in FY 2021. In this revised table, the effective proportion of the budget devoted to student support increased from 24% in FY14 to 26% in FY 2021, and the effective proportion of the budget devoted to staff salaries increased from 7% to 16%. In effect, this increase of both student support and staff salaries has largely been funded by the enrollment growth funding the SOE received in response to the growth of its new programs and, in particular, its new elementary education major.

During this same interval of FY 2014 to FY 2021, the amount and percentage of SOE budget spent on operating expenses dropped dramatically, from 24.23% to 13.16%, but the self-study describes this as the result of events and travel being curtailed during the pandemic. Thus, this temporary reduction in operating expenses also effectively went toward the permanent increase in numbers of staff, a rather risky budgetary practice. In its response to the ARPAC discovery process report, the SOE noted that "finding funds to increase some of the general operating expenditures we will want to re-initiate coming out of the pandemic is a significant challenge to address in our budget, especially given the budget cuts imposed by the university." ARPAC believes that this challenge would exist even in the absence of campus-wide budget cuts, given the priority placed on increased staff hiring.

The availability of indirect cost recovery monies for funding the school's centers also raises concerns. According to the self-study, the four university-authorized centers in the SOE have expressed a need for more security in knowing whether university funding will remain at a consistent level from year to year. In relation to this issue as well as grant funding more generally, the ERC recommends that the SOE reconsider its indirect cost recovery (ICR) allocation process: "At present, individual faculty and research centers do not receive any indirect cost (IDC) returns. This should be revisited, as returning a portion of [indirect cost recovery] can provide infrastructural support and incentivize proposals for grants and contracts in particular." ARPAC agrees that the SOE should examine its ICR allocation practice and consider whether a change in practice would provide benefits to both the centers and the SOE in terms of stability and faculty morale.

Both the self-study and the external reviewers stress the importance of fundraising to the SOE's achieving many of its goals. The self-study notes that the school's advancement team faces a number of competing priorities, including: helping with Fleming building renovations, scholarships, support programs to address statewide teacher shortages, recruiting students of color into teacher education programs, SOE's centers, and endowed chairs. Several new staff positions have been created to expand the school's advancement team. ARPAC considers this to be a wise direction for staff expansion but expects to see greater returns on advancement efforts as a result. The dean should prioritize advancement success and demonstrate the impacts of better fundraising at the time of the next ARPAC follow-up.

## Space and Infrastructure

The SOE recently moved into the renovated Fleming building, which has classrooms, open meeting spaces, offices, open space offices for staff, desks and lockers for doctoral students, three conference rooms, huddle spaces, and more. The SOE is now conducting a second phase of renovation, which will include four additional classrooms (three of which will hold 30 students), more conference rooms and huddle spaces, an adequate number of offices (as faculty are currently housed in other buildings and sharing offices), more space for doctoral students and research staff, open meeting space for collaboration and study, a space that will accommodate faculty meetings, and enough space for all of the school's centers, which for the first time will all be housed in the same building. The SOE is working to raise money for these renovations. The school indicates that these renovations will result in sufficient space, but also that its growing programs might soon require additional classrooms.

Indeed, the external reviewers note that these additional renovations might not fully address the school's space needs, including office space for faculty and staff, classroom space, and space for the centers. Some faculty reported having to share office space with those who do not have office space, especially those who interact with students. A lack of hospitable space contributes to the challenge of attracting faculty and staff back to in-person work, and it can thwart much-needed community building. ARPAC urges the SOE to make sure that going forward space is assigned equitably.

## Support Needs

The SOE did not report any specific support needs from the Research and Innovation Office (RIO) or other campus offices. However, as noted above, in the reply to the ARPAC discovery process report, the SOE's dean expressed that the school's operating budget is too small. As the new campus budget model is implemented, ARPAC feels that the university should continue supporting the SOE with some level of supplemental funding beyond the budget it receives from the core funds. This is not uncommon for schools of education, and many universities recognize that such investments are critical given the

societal imperative of preparing educators and researchers who can contribute to the operation and improvement of public education.

## Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee address the following recommendations to the School of Education and to the offices of responsible administrators:

### To the Unit and the Dean:

1. Expand efforts to improve the unit's culture and actively respond to related concerns by nurturing a positive environment involving leadership, faculty, staff, and students. Work with the university's Ombuds Office, the Office of Faculty Relations, and the School of Education's consultant in the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to develop skills and structures to:
  - a. Repair fractured relationships and work on continuously building trust.
  - b. Engage multiple strategies to improve communication and transparency.
  - c. Understand the ways in which complex power dynamics may influence people's willingness to speak up in meetings.

As part of this effort, explore available tools for evaluating the SOE's culture in advance of the next campus-wide culture survey, currently planned for fall 2025.

2. As a component in improving faculty morale, consider how faculty service can be more evenly distributed and clarify the faculty course reduction policy. There is a sense that service is not carried out equally among faculty members.
  - a. Systematically gather data on SOE faculty service loads. Specifically, review course reductions that are provided for service.
  - b. Provide SOE faculty members with a clear and transparent explanation of the course reduction policy, preferably in writing and in a way that makes the policy continuously accessible.
  - c. If warranted after discussion with the faculty, revise the course reduction policy to align it with campus norms for service workloads. While faculty holding leadership positions require some degree of course release, the distortions such releases may cause to the overall teaching load distribution, and the inequities such releases cause for faculty members who provide service without receiving course reductions, must be addressed.
3. Consider simplifying graduate programmatic offerings. As the SOE has launched new graduate degree programs and tracks in recent years, it is important to assess needs and to prioritize. In particular:
  - a. Assess which graduate programs and tracks may no longer serve student needs or have sufficient demand.
  - b. Find common interests and objectives across graduate programs and tracks and consider whether some programs and tracks would be enriched by becoming integrated.
4. In the context of examining service distribution and the number of graduate programs, consider streamlining the school's administrative structure. Compare the SOE's administrative structure to that of other CU Boulder schools and colleges, and to similarly sized peer education schools, to determine the optimal number of faculty

divisions and to determine the necessity of separate leadership positions for each program area.

5. Cease the practice of having graduate students serve as instructors of record for graduate courses, except in exceptional cases where the graduate student has professional experience equivalent to a terminal (doctoral) degree.
6. Expand the number of faculty if student enrollments warrant the increase.
7. Carefully consider whether staff numbers need to be increased given budgetary realities.
8. Move toward offering competitive salaries for faculty. While resources are limited, competitive salaries are essential to faculty and staff recruitment and retention.
9. Examine DA-ICR return policies. At present, research centers do not receive any indirect cost recovery (ICR) returns. This should be revisited, as returning a portion of ICR can provide infrastructure support and incentivize proposals for grants and contracts in particular.
10. Bolster fundraising efforts. Increasing the donor base in the coming years will be important, especially to fund building renovation costs and increased student support.
11. Monitor space concerns to ensure that faculty and staff have workspaces where they can be productive and build a community.

### To the Dean of the Graduate School:

12. Do not allow graduate students to serve as instructors of graduate courses, except in truly exceptional cases where the graduate student has professional experience equivalent to a terminal (doctoral) degree.

### To the Provost:

13. Continue supporting the SOE with some level of supplemental funding beyond core budget funds.

## Required Follow-up

The dean of the School of Education shall submit two follow-up reports—one due on the first of April 2024 and one due on the first of April 2026. The follow-up reports are to be addressed to the provost and other central campus leadership and shall focus on the implementation of the recommendations from ARPAC detailed herein. The relevant central campus leadership and the provost will also respond to all outstanding matters under their purview arising from this review year’s recommendations. Relevant central campus leaders and the provost will submit a follow-up report due on June 1, 2024, and June 1, 2026.