Overview

Survey Objectives

During May and June of 2011, the College administered a survey to current students in the Early Childhood and Family Studies (ECFS) major and Education, Learning and Society (ELS) minor programs.

The survey was undertaken with the following objectives:

- Discover what drew students to the ECFS/ELS program
- Obtain feedback about program experience and course needs
- Better understand student education goals and expectations
- Determine alum future plans

Methodology

The survey content was developed collaboratively by College of Education undergraduate staff, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Office of Institutional Research. Questions were developed using the College’s current undergraduate alumni survey and last year’s ELS minor survey. Survey items were arranged into sections reflective of the survey objectives. The survey was administered online by email; including between two and three follow-up emails per program in addition to the initial email message.

Survey Response

Of the 140 spring 2011 ECFS students, 84 responded to the survey for a response rate of 60%.

Of the 255 spring 2011 ELS students, 114 responded to the survey for a response rate of 45%.

Key Findings

- ECFS and ELS students first hear about the programs in different ways.
  - ECFS majors reported hearing about the major more from the UW website, College of Education website, and open house events than did ELS minors.
  - ELS minor students reported hearing about the minor more from friends, academic advisors, and in class from professors/instructors than did majors.

- Many of the ECFS and ELS students are of the first generation in their family to attend college (29% of majors and 41% of minors).

- The majority of ECFS and ELS students would consider participating in an undergraduate education major that prepares students for a post-bac one year elementary teacher certification program.
  - Students would prefer the Master’s degree option for certification with this program, however more minors than majors prefer the cert only option (36% compared to 20% of respondents).

- All students agree that they need more course offerings and options.

- ELS students reported guest speakers as the most valuable part of the ELS minor colloquium.
• ELS and ECFS student career plans include pursuing teaching (66% of respondents), however there are a number of students interested in non-teaching careers and training.

• When asked how the major could be improved, ECFS Students reported the need for better coordination of major goals, courses, and faculty communication.

Contacts

Please direct any corrections, comments or concerns regarding this report to:

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Manager of Institutional Research
University of Washington – College of Education
kemath@u.washington.edu
Background Information

How did you first hear about the ECFS major/ELS minor?

First Heard of Program

I am (select all that apply):

Non-traditional Background
What influenced your decision to become involved in the ECFS major/ELS minor? (select all that apply) ("Educating young children career interest" not an option for ELS minors and "add minor to complement major" not an option for ECFS majors)
Interest in an Integrated Undergraduate Elementary Teacher Education Program

We are considering an undergraduate education major or minor that specifically prepares students for a post baccalaureate one year elementary teacher certification program with an emphasis on the teaching internship. Is this program something you would have an interest in?

If this new undergraduate program fed into an elementary teacher certification program, which type of post baccalaureate program would you prefer?

- Program ending in teaching certificate only - (fewer requirements, shortened timeline)
- Program ending in teaching certificate and master’s degree - (more requirements, longer timeline)
- Unsure

Program Type Preference

- ECFS Majors
  - Master's degree: 50%
  - Cert only: 36%
  - Unsure: 15%
- ELS Minors
  - Master's degree: 55%
  - Cert only: 20%
  - Unsure: 26%
Of the courses offered as part of the ECFS major/ELS minor, how much of the following course topics would you like to see offered?

### ECFS Major Course Offering Frequency Preference

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<th>More</th>
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### ELS Minor Course Offering Frequency Preference

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Number of survey respondents requesting more coursework in the following areas:

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<th># ELS</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Communications</td>
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<td>59</td>
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Which of the following recently offered or new education undergraduate courses would you be interested in taking? (select all the apply)
What other courses or types of courses would you like to see offered as part of the ECFS major?

Thirty-one (31/84 or 37%) responded to this open ended question. The most frequently expressed themes were the following:

• Several students reported they would like to see some different options for family studies courses (8/31 or 26% of respondents).
  
  “Far more classes related to social policy, families, and careers involving children and their families that aren't teaching--administration, social work, therapy, etc.”
  
  “family studies classes; a class that explore other career options besides teaching”
  
  “courses that include family and cultural issues”

• Students were interested in taking more special education (4/31 or 13% of respondents) and psychology courses (4/31 or 13% of respondents).
  
  “Much more EDSPE classes for undergrads”
  
  “More special Ed curriculum and instruction courses. I see a lack of teaching strategies taught in the ECFS major regarding sp Ed students.”
  
  “Some Psychology courses that are related to young children/infants. (the courses are listed, but they are never offered)”

What other courses or types of courses would you like to see offered as part of the ELS minor?

Twenty-six (26/114 or 23%) responded to this open ended question. The most frequently expressed themes were the following:

• Students would like more teaching methods type courses offered (7/26 or 26% of respondents).
  
  “Methods courses - how do you teach your subject, plan lessons, etc.”
  
  “more subject-specific curriculum classes, like a class for lesson-building in maths, sciences, language arts, or music, etc. The electives in the Math department for teachers do not focus on teaching the material to others, they only focus on thinking and talking about the material in an advanced discourse; so there is no emphasis on how a secondary student would understand or be taught these topics. It would be nice to take a class on currently-relied-upon techniques for introducing topics and building secondary students' understanding of them.”
  
  “Possibly a practicum course where students can go to a school and teach for one class or an after school program.”

• Students reported an interest in learning about multicultural or international education topics (7/26 or 26% of respondents).
  
  “Multicultural education, sports and education”
“Education across countries and cultures”

“Courses specifically about ELL students and issues surrounding that.”

If the ELS one credit Colloquium (GEN ST 300) were not required for the minor would you still take it as an ELS elective?

If you have already taken the ELS Colloquium, which parts did you find most valuable? (please select TOP TWO)

- Guest speakers: 84%
- Readings/videos/podcasts: 43%
- Small group discussions: 42%
- Midterm presentations: 19%
- Self-reflexive writing projects: 17%
If the ELS minor was offered instead as a major, would you have still enrolled in it?

- Yes: 58%
- Maybe: 27%
- No: 15%
Future Plans

I plan to do the following after I finish my undergraduate degree: (please select all that apply)

Future Plans

What type of graduate education do you plan to pursue? (please select all that apply)

Type of Graduate Education

What type of work will you be pursuing after graduation? (only asked of ECFS majors)

Twenty-eight (28/84 or 33%) responded to this open ended question. The most frequently expressed themes were the following:

- Several students reported that they were pursuing a teaching position (14/26 or 54% of respondents).
“I have recently been hired as an ECEAP teacher assistant with the Renton School District.”

“head start teacher”

“Teaching”

• Several students reported that they were interested in preschool (9/26 or 35% of respondents).

  “Lead Preschool Teaching Position”

  “pre school teaching, or other work with children”

  “I want to teach preschool or nanny”

• A number of students had an interest in teaching abroad (4/26 or 15% of respondents).

  “teaching english in central america”

  “Special education work or work abroad”

• Students not mentioned teaching or working with preschool children had a variety of other interests (11/26 or 38% of respondents).

  “Non-Profit Management”

  “Early Childhood Administration”

  “social services, working with at risk population--not teaching.”

  “I want to work closely with the Latino community and talk to parents about parent involvement in their childs edu.”
Suggestions for Improvement

Are there ways we could improve the (ECFS) major?

Fifty-six (53/84 or 63%) responded to this open ended question. The most frequently expressed themes were the following:

- Students felt communication between faculty and program staff could be improved and that the major could use better organization (16/53 or 30% of respondents).

  “Please let faculty communicate with each other about deadlines they set up, because most of them are the same or very close. Also more communciation between faculty about what is being taught in each course so there is less overlap. and PLEASE give rubrics out MUCH earlier with specific guidelines so there is less confusion and people do not recieve different answers to the same question.”

  “Communications among professors and instructors to understand what is going on within the major throughout the year and quarter by quarter.”

  “more communication between teachers lesson plans in the major- we have a lot of repeat lessons in the same quarter.”

  “Organization and maybe get more advisers. Lisa is awesome, but it seems like she has a lot on her plate and it’s hard to get a hold of her most of the time.”

- Students had feedback about the capstone project around clarity and flexibility of the requirements (7/53 or 13% of respondents).

  “There needs to be more explicit expectations for the Senior Capstone project described in detail much earlier than it was explained for our cohort. I know many of us are still unclear of the requirements”

  “Allow the senior project to be more flexible. Allow the students to come up with their own culminating project that has to be approved. I would have liked to do a job shadow that focused on my future career goals.”

- There were differing points of view about the goals/direction of the major and the tension between coursework geared towards teaching versus general education versus early childhood coursework (7/53 or 13% of respondents).

  “The major says "Early Childhood & Family Studies"---I do not feel that I got any knowledge about family studies. I would like for the major to not focus so much on teaching because the majority of the students in the major do not want to become a teacher, they chose this major because they have an interest in the education field or enjoys being with and learning about children.”

  “Provide a program that either prepares students very well for MIT or offers a certificate program for undergrads.”

  “i was expecting balance focus between early childhood and families studies but i see more on early childhood.”

- Students reported too much repetitiveness and overlap in course content (6/53 or 11% of respondents).
“Many of the core ECFS classes overlap reading assignments and lectures making classes seem redundant. I highly recommend revising all of these classes to make them more worthwhile. The instructors should also know more about the major itself. Two of my professors/graduate TAs asked our classes if we were enrolled in service learning - which is surprising because this is a core component of the ECFS major!”

“Much of the reading and course work spills over onto other classes, which is fine, but at times can be very redundant. For example, several classes have reviewed Erikson and Vygotsky theory (which I don’t think should be a critical portion of this degree), we have over used the CLASS and WA State Benchmarks, etc.”

**Are there ways we could improve the (ELS) minor?**
Fifty-six (40/114 or 35%) responded to this open ended question. The most frequently expressed themes were the following:

- Students overwhelming agreed that they would like to see more course offerings, including more electives (17/40 or 43% of respondents).
  
  “Offer more classes. There are not many classes offered especially those required classes. Those that are offered become filled quickly.”

  “Offer classes earlier, too many in afternoon. Provide more choices per quarter”

  “More variety of classes; I was disappointed that there were no classes in leadership or administration.”

- A handful of students reported that they would like to see the ELS minor made into a major (6/40 or 15% of respondents).

  “Create the education major with teaching certificate”

  “1st, I think ELS should be a major because most universities have an education while uw only a pre-k major and 2nd, the minor or major should have a strong community aspect, incorporating a cohort or some other method of facilitating community that stays constant until graduation.”

  “I wish there were more direct links between the minor and how that connections and/or relates UW’s MIT program. I think this could be better communicated to ELS minors and be more organized about how this might play into our futures. Thanks!”

- A couple students thought the minor could be better advertised (3/40 or 8% of respondents).

  “More promotion! I would have loved to have started when I first arrived at the UW but didn’t know about it until my second or third quarter here. Being a transfer student I have had less time to take some of the awesome electives offered for the minor and I’m kinda sad about that.”

  “I didn’t even know about this until my junior year. Luckily I can still graduate on time even though I just found out. I wish I would’ve known earlier though.”