Question TI4.1 - How does the EPP view its capacity to sustain the TI?

Sustainability of the ECU Transformation Initiative—the Pirate CODE—can be described from several perspectives: 1) the TI Goals; 2) the TI Features; 3) the TI Innovations; and 4) the TI Focus on Outcomes. The Brief Overview of the TI in the Institutional Report made note of each of these perspectives. A brief summary of how the EPP views its capacity to sustain the TI from each perspective is provided below.

1) TI Goals

TI Goals outlines in the Institutional Report are as follows:

a. Develop the Research on Practice model, codifying its steps and developing an implementation model to institutionalize innovations within programs.
b. Document the implementation of research-based innovations in the teacher education curricula with concerted efforts to expand implementation into all ITPs at the institution.
c. Develop and engage in practice-based research surrounding the seven Pirate CODE project innovations.
d. Document and communicate the process, the successes, and the challenges of the Pirate CODE by contributing to the research literature through publications, presentations, and collegial conversations at the institution, state, and national levels.

ECU is making significant and strategic progress toward achieving the goals set forth in the Institutional Report. Progress can be measured by expansion of Pirate CODE implementations, development of new innovations utilizing the Pirate CODE model, submission of research proposals, and submission and acceptance of proposals for peer-reviewed presentations and publications. During the past 12-18 months the progress has intensified and serves as a positive sign of the EPP’s ability to sustain the TI.

2) TI Features

The stages of the R&D model of the TI—the Pirate CODE—were described in more detail in the original TI proposal and in the Overview of the TI provided in the Institutional Report. Embedding this model as a development framework for EPP faculty helps to sustain the model beyond the timeframe of the TI and beyond the original programs of the TI, the Department of Elementary Education and Middle Grades Education.

The COE did not only think about the content of the innovations but the procedures necessary to successfully implement, assess and scale-up the innovations that comprise the EPP.

The initial implementation of an innovation was labelled (consciously so) a “squishy pilot.” The use of this term was intentional and was selected to communicate a recognition that innovations have to go through a revision/settling period before they can be assessed. If they are deemed “promising” through the initial data collection phase, then they are formalized and implemented in one or two programs. As
information about the quality and utility of the innovation becomes communicated, other programs are invited to join the “innovation” workgroup.

3) TI Innovations

The ability to sustain the Pirate CODE innovations beyond the timeframe of the TI is enhanced by their development as:

a. “explicit enhancements to curriculum, field experiences, and clinical experiences in ELMID, and beyond.”

b. “are designed to enhance program quality and address significant issues in the field.”

Since the innovations, by design, are implemented within curriculum, field experiences, and clinical experiences, once embedded, the focus of sustainability is on the quality of the implementation, or “fidelity of implementation,” a new effort underway by the lead team of EPP faculty who have been integrally involved in the Pirate CODE. For additional information about how fidelity of implementation (FOI) is beginning to make an impact on the continued quality and implementation of Pirate CODE innovations, see Question 2.6.2.

4) TI Focus on Outcomes

The EPP’s ability to sustain its focus on outcomes as part of the TI is no longer a desire of the ECU TI, rather it is becoming a common practice for teacher preparation programs nationally. Therefore, sustainability is not optional, it’s now a requirement. Lead faculty for each Pirate CODE innovation are focusing on outcomes for teacher candidates at program completion and on P-12 student learning outcomes of graduates during their first few years in the field. Through the increased focus in North Carolina on linking P-12 student learning outcomes to teacher preparation, UNC system institutions, like ECU, will have access to teacher effectiveness data for their graduates. This focus helps to support the EPP’s capacity to sustain the TI’s focus on outcomes.