

Weber State University

Automotive Service Technology Program

External Review Visit: March 29, 2012

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External Review Report: April 3, 2012

A. Mission Statement

The Mission Statement is clear in that the program plans *“to prepare graduates to be competent in the technical theory and application of the automobile and become immediately productive as an automotive technician.”* There are plans to offer *“specific training and certification”* with *“support from various automotive manufacturers and service programs”* i.e., General Motors Corporation, Toyota Motor Sales USA, Chrysler Corporation, Ford Motor Corporation, Collision Repair Industry, Independent Shops, and the HD-Truck Industry. The Automotive Service Technology Program prides itself on utilizing a variety of instructional methods i.e., computer use, “hands on” work and even “YouTube”. They pride themselves on creating students with *“the ability to communicate and solve problems efficiently”* who *“will have developed a lifelong skill.”* All of this resonates with the College of Applied Science and Technology’s (COAST’s) goals to offer a *“wide variety of programs”* as well as *“different delivery methods”* and with COAST’s mission of *preparing students for employment upon graduation and ensuring that they are productive, accountable, and responsible individuals able to function effectively in today’s workplace* and of *“engaging in scholarly activities which expand the technological education our students receive and provide a service to business and industry.”*

Additionally, the mission statement, program implementation, and expected outcomes resonate well with the national standards set by ASE (*National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence*) and NATEF (the *National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation*). Future reviewers may also want to check with the manufacturing representatives for additional feedback.

At the moment, advising is handled by individual instructors. There is no general advisement for students interested in general education courses needed for degree completion. This is a weakness noted by the reviewers as well as by the department faculty and students.

B. Curriculum

It is evident that the current program reflects the thoughtful work of the instructors and an effective response to concerns stated by previous reviewers. The current program is consistent with the mission and vision of the department as well as of the school. We find the current curriculum to be innovative in its use of technology and teaching styles to create exciting and appropriate learning opportunities for students. Curriculum is structured and more than adequately prepares students to compete in the workforce. The use of ASE and NATEF as a measure reflects the skill proficiency of students in the program.

Once again, a challenge to this program is the lack of funding designated for the hiring of an advisor and for adding one more instructor. Limited funding also precludes the possibility of offering summer courses. Additionally, it limits the offering of some needed courses to one time per year.

C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Learning outcomes reflect program goals. Students express satisfaction with the program in that they are learning material critical to their success in the field. Multiple measures are used to measure learning. Constant measurements are present that are both individual and industry based. Results from ASE (*National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence*) testing reflect the success of the program in producing certified automotive repair technicians. Additionally, the program has accreditation from NATEF (the *National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation*), based on the results of on-site evaluations. This is important as the "*State Departments of Education in all 50 states support NATEF accreditation of automotive programs*".

Learning outcomes are directly linked to the program's curriculum and manifested in an explicit curriculum grid. Faculty members are working on program improvement and development in accordance with industry standards. It is unclear, however, if program faculty are meeting regularly i.e., weekly to discuss measures used for student learning. Yet this is a tremendous improvement from what was available five years ago, in the previous program review.

D. Academic Advisement

The Review Committee was impressed with the program instructors. Students expressed enthusiasm at having instructors who care about them. They said instructors have given them their cell phone numbers and made themselves readily accessible to the students.

The Automotive Service Technology Program needs to take measures to improve their advisement since the last review. They need to restructure faculty/staff so an advisor

can be designated who can facilitate student progress and increase graduation rates. Since there is no designated advisor and instructors carry a large work load, advisement tends to be informal and fragmented. Currently students experience informal advising with some receiving good help and others “falling-through-the-cracks. Students do not have access to a designated departmental advisor who helps them plan their program of study nor who can place them in work sites. Funding does not appear to have been set aside for a designated advisor.

E. Faculty

Full-Time Faculty

The program has six full time faculty members. One is an associate professor and the other five are instructors who teach 15 credit hours each plus overload. The associate professor is also teaching a full load of 12 hours plus overload even though he has 3 hours release time.

Faculty is well-qualified and certified. There is no diversity in the faculty i.e., all are white males. Nothing further was discussed about this.

In meeting with the full-time faculty, it became evident that the loss of a faculty member (due to retirement) without a replacement for a year will create an additional burden to this faculty. Certainly advisement will continue to be an issue.

Adjunct Faculty

There are also two adjunct faculty members. Nothing further was discussed in this.

Faculty Orientation

There is no structure for orientation of new or contract/adjunct faculty. This needs to be addressed.

Evaluation of Teaching

Student evaluations are used to evaluate teaching on a regular basis. Faculty uses creative projects and YouTube for instruction.

F. Program Support

The program has a full time secretary. The secretary is satisfied with her position. However, she did express concern that without a designated advisor there may be an expectation that she will do the advising. This is something she lacks training for and which is not written in her job description.

There is a newly hired recruiter. It is hoped that she will be successful in recruiting additional students to the program. She too expressed concern regarding possible expectations that she will do advising. She also maintains that this is not part of her job description and that her constant travel would make it difficult for her to do any

advising.

Faculty/staff expressed a need for an advisor/program coordinator. They also stated that the Chair supports them well.

Facilities, equipment, and library support are adequate.

G. Relationships with External Communities

The program's community relationships appear to be working well. Classrooms are painted to reflect the companies that support them. The presence of the major automotive manufactures i.e., General Motors Corporation, Toyota Motor Sales USA, Chrysler Corporation, Ford Motor Corporation are clearly evident. Collision Repair Industry, Independent Shops, and the HD-Truck Industry are not so clearly present. Independent and some other areas may have needs that are not met equally.

There is an advisory committee that meets twice a year. Although the Review Team did not see the minutes, we were told they are available.

H. Program Summary

Strengths

The Dean spoke positively about the department as did the Chair.

In looking at the self-study, it is apparent that this is a focused program with highly committed faculty that produce qualified undergraduate students. The Chair is viewed as supportive of the program and has done well with the department in successfully implementing critical changes based on the previous review team's recommendations.

Faculty in this program are obviously qualified and quite dedicated to the students. Their teaching loads reflect that they are also worked very hard.

Assessment of the student learning outcomes by national standards set by ASE (*National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence*) and NATEF (*the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation*), is commendable. Presentation of that data does need to be reworked. Although the students are performing in an exemplary fashion, at first glance, the presentation of the data made it difficult to recognize this.

Areas for Improvement

At the moment, advising is handled by individual instructors. There is no general advisement for students interested in general education courses needed for degree completion. This is a weakness that needs to be addressed in a timely fashion.

Limited funding precludes the teaching of courses in the summer and of having a designated advisor and program coordinator. These issues must be addressed to enable students to finish course work in a timely fashion as well as to be placed in appropriate employment or internship sites.

The role of diversity in faculty and students should be explored. There have been strides made in recruiting international students. The Review Team did not explore

recruitment of diverse U.S. students nor faculty. With WSU's commitment to diversity, this is important to discuss.

Regular meetings should be scheduled for faculty to discuss measures used for student learning. These could also be used for discussion about the structuring of formal training for new faculty as well as adjunct faculty. Another discussion topic for these meetings could revolve around exploring the needs that the Independent shops and other content areas may have.

The Review Team is impressed with the remarkable work done by the faculty of the Automotive Service Technology Program. Faculty members are qualified, extremely hard-working, committed instructors who care about their students as well as the program, despite the large number of credit hours they teach. Additionally, the Program Chair should be commended for his recognition of the faculty workload, the value he places on them and his general support of the program.

It was an honor for us to learn about the program, to meet the faculty, staff, and students, and to do this review.