

**Dean Response**  
**External Program Review**  
**Health Information Management –BS degree**  
**Health Information Technology – AAS degree**

I would like to extend my gratitude to the review team Gail I. Smith, MA, RHIA, CCS-P (team leader), Marie Conde, MPA, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, Tamara Chase, MSN, RN CNE (WSU), and Dr. Fran Butler (WSU) for their time and expert advice to improve our HIM and HIT programs. I also would like to thank the advisory committee, the program faculty, administrative support staff and the University administration for their ongoing support in order to be able to offer state-of-the-art programs.

I agree with the review team comments and input during their visit on March 5, 2012. This team consisted of two seasoned professionals in health information management education and two on campus faculty members.

**The strengths of the programs noted by the team included:**

- Strong support from administration and the HIM community of interest, committed faculty, strong outcomes, and organized and thorough curriculum.
- The faculty agreed that these are strengths of the programs and work diligently to maintain the programs at this level of excellence.

**The team identified no weaknesses of the programs in their evaluation; they did list the following challenges:**

- Constant changes in the field and the need to prepare graduates for future positions and new credentials (e.g. Certified in Clinical Document Specialist) (CCDS)
- Focusing on technology in the industry (e.g. Computer-Assisted Coding)
- Encouraging the students to take the national certification examination
- Evaluating the course delivery methods (on-campus, distance, hybrid) to determine best practices

In reference to the constant changes in the field and the need to prepare graduates for future positions and credentials, the program has added a focused unit on clinical documentation improvement and another on auditing into our coding curriculum. Two program faculty are AHIMA approved ICD-10 Trainers and are currently teaching ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS in our programs.

Computer-Assisted Coding is being introduced in their Computer Applications in Healthcare course and the program is investigating if one of their vendor partners can assist us in bringing this technology into the HIM lab. The program is also constantly evaluating and adding links to appropriate online resources for students to aide in their understanding of healthcare diagnosis and procedures.

The program will be requiring students to purchase the certification examination preparation book as their text for HIM 2862 Professional Practice Experience. They will be adding assignments to this course that require students to take a mock certification examination and develop a study plan for the certification examination

The final program challenge identified by the review team was in the area of course delivery methods. This is a constant challenge for the program and one that the faculty believes to be their biggest. They currently delivery their entire curriculum online and on campus, and over the years the campus complement of students has decreased. In an effort to not compete with their offerings for students, they offer online and campus sections of required courses in opposite semesters. This was a conscious attempt to increase enrollment in campus courses that has not been realized. The program really offers most campus courses in a hybrid format at this time, which has improved enrollment, but not significantly. The program challenge is to get students into their campus classroom.

Health information management and technology has historically been a field that is unknown to the average high school student. The program would like to see some increased funding in the recruitment and advertising area to assist us with reaching out to the community and build awareness of the high need for qualified health information professionals and WSU's high quality program. The DCHP Admissions and Advisement should be asked for additional assistance together with Northern Utah AHEC to increase recruitment activities in these areas.

The program review team also offered the following additional recommendations to the programs:

- Evaluate the possibility of incorporating CDI (Clinical Documentation Improvement) content linked to ICD-10 education to strengthen the job opportunities for graduates.
- Continue to offer courses to meet the needs of the community, as needed.
- Explore the possibility of faculty attending distance learning conferences to enhance their knowledge/skill of teaching and learning in an online delivery model. If the program continues to expand the course offerings in the distance-learning model, the faculty would benefit from best practices from experts in the field.
- Monitor the number of students not taking the national certification examination. If there is an upward trend, investigate reasons and develop an action plan (e.g. module on test-taking skills, practice mock exams).

The issues of clinical documentation improvement and students not taking the national certification examination have been addressed previously. The recommendation to offer continuing education courses to meet the community needs is a great one. The program is currently offering an Anatomy and Pathophysiology refresher course for diagnosis and procedure coders in the area. This course was developed at the request of the community at large and has been taken by coders within the state of Utah as well as throughout the country.

The program is considering offering a CE course for ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS coding that will be available to anyone interested in these courses that works in the coding function. The exact timing for development of these courses will depend on action by the US Congress on the

implementation date for ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS. This was originally scheduled for October 1, 2013, but a possible one year delay is being discussed.

The review team's recommendations for faculty to attend distance learning conferences is one that the program embracing with much enthusiasm. They will investigate the options for these programs and submit for possible travel funding. The Marriott Faculty Development funds will be available for the faculty to apply in the college.

The program faculty is making a concerted effort to improve all of their online courses and enhance the learning connection as we transition to the CANVAS platform. The HIM program director has attended the WSU online Master Online Teaching Certification program, and one other faculty member has just been selected to participate in the 2012-2013 academic year.

I commend the department Chair and the program faculty for their well-outlined curriculum, hard-work and their teaching activities. The faculty have continues support from the dean's office in all the areas of concern and all that have been outlined to complete.

Congratulations on successful review.