

Faculty Response to Site Visit Report

Program: Health Promotion

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Overview

Dr. Julie Gast (Utah State University) and Dr. Dianna Abel (Weber State University) conducted an extensive review of the Health Promotion Program (HPP). The review involved examination of the HPP self-study document, and site interviews with faculty, staff, administration, students, and program stakeholders. Consistent with the self-study format, the review team provided commendations and recommendations for each of the following standards: (a) Mission; (b) Curriculum; (c) Student Learning Outcomes; (d) Academic Advising; (e) Faculty; (f) Program Support; (g) Relationships with External Communities; and (h) Results of Previous Program Reviews. The HPP faculty responses to these items, including action plans developed by HPP to capitalize on existing strengths and address the review-team recommendations, are outlined in the subsequent pages.

Commendations

The program review team noted a number of HPP strengths at the conclusion of the site-team visit (see Table 1). In particular, the review team stated that HPP had a thoroughly-articulated mission, and that course activities helped students to develop professional skills linked to national standards. The review team also noted that staff and faculty were program strengths: for example, that a full-time academic adviser was used by HPP to assist with informing students of program requirements and policies, an internship coordinator develops and supervises field experiences for students, and that HPP faculty were knowledgeable and passionate about the material they teach.

The HPP faculty agree with the commendations provided by the review team and intend to continue to capitalize on these existing program strengths. In particular, the program mission will continue to focus on the professional-development of students, and the accompanying HPP goals and objectives will remain strategically-linked with this mission. Moreover, the program curriculum will maintain alignment to national standards (i.e., those endorsed by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing/NCHEC) for the field of health education/promotion, and course assessments based on these standards will persist. In regard to staff and faculty, the program will continue to utilize a full-time academic advisor and internship coordinator to assist students to navigate their programs of study, and retain the existing new faculty hired in 2017 to increase instructional capacity.

Table 1. HPP Commendations from Review Team Based on Self-Study Standards

Standard	Commendations
A. Mission	1. HPP is clearly fulfilling its mission and providing students with: (a) training based on the verified responsibility areas necessary for professional development; (b) a university-wide elective (i.e., HLTH 1030); and (c) valuable field experiences (i.e., HLTH 4860).
B. Curriculum	2. HPP engages in intentional curriculum mapping to document key skills introduced, emphasized, and assessed in professional-development courses. 3. Data collection and evaluation efforts conducted by HPP is impressive. 4. Resources allocated to assist students to prepare for certification exams is noteworthy. 5. The recent hiring of highly-qualified faculty will strengthen the HPP curriculum in the coming years.
C. Student Learning Outcomes	6. Benchmark data are collected and reviewed annually based on program goals.
D. Academic Advising	7. A new advisor is in place with a clear plan to follow HPP curriculum and reduce program exceptions for students. 8. A plan is in place for review of advising performance by faculty and students.
E. Faculty	9. New faculty have been hired to better meet the needs of HPP and students. 10. Teaching training is available as needed at WSU to improve instructor performances. 11. Students felt supported and mentored by HPP faculty while at WSU and after graduation.
F. Program Support	12. HPP is well supported with addition of internship coordinator, new faculty, academic advisor, and office support staff.
G. Relationships with External Communities	13. HPP has well-established relationships with multiple community- and health-based organizations to place students for internships. 14. Data are being collected by HPP from stakeholders and alumni to evaluate the satisfaction of these relationships. 15. WSU conducts site visits while students are completing internship hours—a rare practice at most universities. 16. Having an internship coordinator ensures HPP students receive standardized information and evaluations concerning internship expectations. 17. Stakeholders reported that WSU students were professional, passionate, understood prevention, and were able to multi-task. 18. Stakeholders believed CHES was important and desirable for students.
H. Results of Previous Program Reviews	19. HPP addressed recommendations that were provided in the past program review (i.e., additional CHES preparation, hiring of new faculty, continued focus on internships experience and collaboration with community stakeholders, curriculum mapping aligned with national standards, etc.).

Recommendations

To improve the functioning of HPP, the program review team provided a number of recommendations (see Table 2). These recommendations are highlighted next along with the responses and proposed action plans by HPP.

Table 2. *Recommendations from Review Team to Improve HPP Standards*

Standard	Recommendations
A. Mission	1. Create a strategic plan for the program that includes vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plan to achieve these.
B. Curriculum	2. Incorporate into courses/curriculum more authentic learning experiences that apply directly to workplace skills. 3. Key professional areas to consider adding to courses/curriculum include health policy, grant writing, technology, budgeting, and administration. 4. Consider scaffolding courses and obtaining student input on desired courses for inclusion. 5. Consider offering program planning and evaluation course over two semesters. 6. Consider offering multiple tracks within HPP (e.g., holistic health, community health). 7. Consider offering face-to-face and online sections of professional-development courses.
C. Student Learning Outcomes	8. Document procedures and outcomes of annual reviews.
D. Academic Advising	9. Develop plan and means to disseminate information to students regarding preferred sequencing of courses. 10. Provide students with information on career opportunities in field. 11. Establish a student advisory group to obtain feedback on curriculum sequencing and other student needs.
E. Faculty	12. Conduct peer reviews of online courses to ensure best practices are followed, and develop recommended strategies for online delivery. 13. Develop recommended strategies for online HPP courses to engage students. 14. Provide mentoring opportunities for distance-delivery students. 15. Develop plan for equitable faculty input into direction and decision making for HPP.
F. Program Support	None
G. Relationships with External Communities	16. Require students to have completed advanced-level coursework prior to internship placement. 17. Revise internship expectations for students to require specific deliverables related to CHES responsibilities.
H. Results of Previous Program Reviews	18. Provide students with more exposure to working professionals and authentic learning experiences. 19. Incorporate guest speakers in lower level courses that address career opportunities. 20. Make students aware of the importance of CHES early in their program of study. 21. Continue to collect benchmark data to monitor improvements in course rigor and extent that NCHEC responsibilities are being adequately covered.

1. **Create a strategic plan for the program that includes vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plan to achieve these.**
 - 1.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Although HPP does have a strategic plan (i.e., mission, goals, objectives, etc.), the plan does not include a vision statement or identification of specific goals to achieve in the next 3-5 years.
 - 1.2. **Action Plan: By April 2020,** the HPP faculty will update the HPP strategic plan to include a vision statement, strategic goals aligned to WSU initiatives (e.g., access, affordability, value/quality), and plans to support HPP strengths and address unit challenges.
2. **Incorporate into courses/curriculum more authentic learning experiences that apply directly to workplace skills.**
 - 2.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Although HPP faculty are committed to providing students with knowledge and skills relevant and applicable to their personal and professional lives, some courses do not contain authentic assessments of student learning.
 - 2.2. **Action Plan: By August 2019,** each HPP faculty will include in their courses an authentic assignment that (a) requires application of what students have learned, and (b) replicates or simulates the contexts in which adults are “tested” in the workplace or personal life. In particular, instructors of HLTH-prefixed professional-development courses will assess students in verified competencies for health education practice outlined by the *National Commission for Health Education Credentialing* (NCHEC), the chief organization responsible for promoting the professional practice of health education/promotion: <http://www.nche.org/credentialing/responsibilities/>.
3. **Key professional areas to consider adding to courses/curriculum include health policy, grant writing, technology, budgeting, and administration.**
 - 3.1. **Program Response: Agree.** The curriculum for HPP currently includes courses that cover health policy (HAS 4320, Health Care Economics and Policy), technology (HLTH 3100, Applications of Technology in Health Promotion), budgeting (HLTH 4150, Needs Assessment and Planning Health Promotion Programs), and administration (HAS 3260, Health Care Administrative and Supervisory Theory). A course in grant writing, however, is not currently offered in the HPP curriculum, either as a required or elective course.
 - 3.2. **Action Plan: By August 2020,** the supporting coursework for HPP will be expanded to include (a) a course on grant writing (HAS 4500, Grant Writing), and (b) more elective options in management and administration also will be considered for inclusion (e.g., OCRE 3100, Recreation Leadership and Group Facilitation; OCRE 3600, Administration and Management of Outdoor and Community Services).
4. **Consider scaffolding courses and obtaining student input on desired courses for inclusion.**
 - 4.1. **Program Response: Agree.** The current HPP curriculum was designed to follow a specific sequence of courses based on hierarchical course numbers (e.g., HLTH 3000, HLTH 3200, HLTH 4013, etc.). The curriculum, however, includes only a few pre-requisite courses to force students to adhere to the desired order of courses and, consequently, students are not always building on what they have previously learned.
 - 4.2. **Action Plan: By December 2019,** HPP faculty will examine and update the HPP curriculum map to address academic gaps with a focus on improving vertical coherence (or course sequences) to allow students to build on what they have learned in earlier courses. Before implementing any changes to the HPP

curriculum, a focus group with HPP students will be conducted to obtain information about their opinions, insights, and receptivity to any proposed changes.

5. Consider offering program planning and evaluation course over two semesters.

- 5.1. **Program Response: Disagree.** The current program planning course is a 4-credit course focused on needs assessment and program planning. Rather than create two courses, the current format for HLTH 4150 will be expanded to include greater focus on program implementation, evaluation, and administration.
- 5.2. **Action Plan: By August 2019,** the format for HLTH 4150 will be expanded to include student learning activities and assessments related to program implementation, administration, and evaluation.

6. Consider offering multiple tracks within HPP (e.g., holistic health, community health, etc.).

- 6.1. **Program Response: Disagree.** At present, there is insufficient instructional capacity for HPP to offer multiple tracks or concentrations specific to any one setting or specialty area. Nonetheless, students are able to tailor their degree to meet their unique interests through the selection of elective courses (15 credits).
- 6.2. **Action Plan: By April 2020,** HPP faculty will identify and map elective courses that are best suited for specific professional settings (e.g., schools, hospitals/clinics, public community health agencies, business/industry). The creation of a setting-specific curriculum map will allow faculty and staff to advise students on appropriate, elective coursework that is specific to students' career aspirations.

7. Consider offering face-to-face and online sections of professional-development courses.

- 7.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Offering courses in multiple formats (e.g., online, face-to-face) can provide students the opportunity to select their preferred learning environment. Given that HPP is marketed as an online degree, however, course scheduling necessitates that required courses be offered online most semesters.
- 7.2. **Action Plan: By December 2019,** HPP faculty will survey students enrolled in the program on their preferred delivery format (e.g., online, face-to-face) for required- and elective courses. The survey also will gauge student perceptions of the quality and difficulty of online courses compared to courses taught in the traditional classroom.

8. Document procedures and outcomes of annual reviews.

- 8.1. **Program Response: Disagree.** HPP adheres to the annual assessment procedures recommended by the HPER Department, College of Education, and WSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The current procedures include the review and updating of the program mission, goals, curriculum, assessment plan, and assessment results for the most recent academic year. In instances when assessment results do not meet or satisfy established benchmarks, faculty create action plans to correct the identified deficiencies and include these in the annual report. With WSU Academic Affairs initiating a new strategic planning model for academic programs, HPP will adhere to this new reporting model as well.
- 8.2. **Action Plan: By October 2020,** HPP faculty will include in the annual program report, an update on the metrics established to achieve the 3-year HPP strategic goals. The annual report will be posted online and available for public viewing at the WSU OIE website.

9. Develop plan and means to disseminate information to students regarding preferred sequencing of courses.

- 9.1. **Program Response: Disagree.** A suggested sequence of courses (i.e., the HPP Major Academic Plan/MAP) is provided to every student in HPP. Although students are allowed to create a specific plan that best fits

their needs (e.g., preferred timeline to graduation, etc.), the MAP highlights the recommended path to facilitate student learning and timely graduation. The HPER Academic Advisor provides the MAP during individual consultations, and also provides electronic copies via email, to all HPP students.

- 9.2. **Action Plan: By December 2019**, HPP faculty will examine and update the HPP curriculum map to address academic gaps with a focus on improving vertical coherence (or course sequences) to allow students to build on what they have learned in earlier courses. Before implementing any changes to the HPP curriculum, a focus group with HPP students will be conducted to obtain information about their opinions, insights, and receptivity to any proposed changes. Accordingly, any changes made to the HPP curriculum will be reflected in the HPP Major Academic Plan (MAP) provided to students.

10. Provide students with information on career opportunities in field.

- 10.1. **Program Response: Agree.** At present, only a few courses (HLTH 3000, Foundations of Health Promotion; HLTH 3200, Methods in Health Education) in HPP examine employment settings and opportunities in health education/promotion. Consequently, students may need more information from faculty and the staff regarding career opportunities in the field.
- 10.2. **Action Plan: By January 2020**, HPP faculty will disseminate to students career opportunities in health education/promotion (e.g., potential occupational settings, how to find jobs, etc.) via the HPP website and Facebook page. By August 2020, hard-copy brochures that detail career opportunities also will be available from the HPER Academic Advisor.

11. Establish a student advisory group to obtain feedback on curriculum sequencing and other student needs.

- 11.1. **Program Response: Agree.** HPP administers an annual Senior Exit Survey to graduating students to obtain feedback regarding their level of satisfaction with the academic program (e.g., curriculum, faculty) and support services (e.g., academic advising). The addition of a student focus group to obtain further qualitative feedback would assist HPP to make more informed changes to the curriculum and support services.
- 11.2. **Action Plan: Beginning in Fall 2019**, HPP will add questions to the Senior Exit Survey to obtain more information about student feelings and satisfaction with the HPP curriculum, faculty, and services. Before implementing any changes to the HPP curriculum, a focus group with HPP students will be conducted to obtain information about their opinions, insights, and receptivity to any proposed changes.

12. Conduct peer reviews of online courses to ensure best practices are followed, and develop recommended strategies for online delivery.

- 12.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Although HPP faculty teaching online courses are committed to using best practices for online instruction, not every faculty member has received peer reviews of their instructional materials to identify best practices components that are missing or need improvement in their course(s).
- 12.2. **Action Plan: By March 2020**, every HPP faculty member teaching an online course will undergo a best practices course review with a WSU Online instructional designer.

13. Develop recommended strategies for online HPP courses to engage students.

- 13.1. **Program Response: Agree.** HPP faculty teaching online courses do provide students with opportunities for interaction and communication, but the amount of interactions can be increased and strengthened.
- 13.2. **Action Plan: By March 2020**, every HPP faculty member teaching an online course will undergo a best practices course review with a WSU Online instructional designer. This online course review will include

best practices suggestions to increase interaction time between students and the instructor (e.g., online meetings), students with course content (e.g., guided learning activities), and the students themselves (e.g., online discussions, group projects, etc.).

14. Provide mentoring opportunities for distance-delivery students.

- 14.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Support systems are in place for online HPP students (e.g., instructional personnel exist to assist students with technology concerns, etc.), but some students may still feel isolated online and desire further assistance and interaction with faculty and staff.
- 14.2. **Action Plan: By Fall 2020,** HPP online faculty and staff will utilize more efficient help-desk services, online tutoring, peer mentors, and other services to increase satisfaction and success of online learners (e.g., to ensure “online” doesn’t mean “alone” for students).

15. Develop plan for equitable faculty input into direction and decision making for HPP.

- 15.1. **Program Response: Agree.** The current HPP structure values dialogue and inclusive decision making among faculty, but a formal plan to recognize the shared responsibility of faculty in program governance does not exist.
- 15.2. **Action Plan: By October 2019,** HPP faculty will develop a policy statement that specifies each faculty member’s right to participate fully in program governance (e.g., approval of curriculum, student learning outcomes, course fees, etc.), and the collective responsibility of HPP faculty to take part in program development and decision making.

16. Require students to have completed advanced level coursework prior to internship placement.

- 16.1. **Program Response: Agree.** At present, internships (as opposed to practicums) are only appropriate for students with extensive academic experience. Other than “senior standing” there are no pre-requisite courses designated in the WSU Catalog for students to complete prior to participating in an approved internship (i.e., HLTH 4860).
- 16.2. **Action Plan: By August 2020,** HPP will mandate the completion of prerequisite courses (i.e., HLTH 3000, HLTH 3200, HLTH 4150) prior to students completing internship experiences (i.e., HLTH 4860) in health promotion.

17. Revise internship expectations for students to require specific deliverables related to CHES responsibilities.

- 17.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Although the HPP internship experience is designed to involve responsibilities that directly relate to the field of health promotion, and to include the completion of at least one significant project, these items are not reported in the annual assessment of student learning completed by program faculty.
- 17.2. **Action Plan: By April 2020,** HPP students completing internships will be required to complete at least one project relevant to the responsibilities and competencies of health education specialists. The HPER Internship Coordinator (or select HPP faculty) will evaluate and document the evidence of student learning based on the verified responsibilities and competencies of health education specialists.

18. Provide students with more exposure to working professionals and authentic learning experiences.

- 18.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Exposure to working professionals can help students build important connections between what they are learning and the real world. Similarly, course activities completed by students should be relevant and as close as possible to real-world tasks (i.e., authentic) encountered by practitioners and working professionals.

18.2. **Action Plan: By January 2020,** each HPP faculty will (a) include in their professional-development courses activities (online or face-to-face) that offer insights from current practitioners on important health issues, how to find jobs, what to expect in the profession, etc.; and (b) provide an authentic assignment that replicates or simulates real-world tasks similar to workplace settings.

19. Incorporate guest speakers in lower level courses that address career opportunities.

19.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Providing students access to working professionals can provide students insight into different careers, and practitioner's perspectives of the profession.

19.2. **Action Plan: By August 2020,** each HPP faculty will include in their professional-development courses activities (online or face-to-face) that offer insights from current practitioners on important health issues, how to find jobs, what to expect in the profession, etc.

20. Make students aware of the importance of CHES early in their program of study.

20.1. **Program Response: Agree.** Students with a major or minor in Health Promotion should be aware that the curricular standards used in HPP align with national standards (e.g., NCHEC), and understand that these standards serve as the basis for professional preparation, credentialing (e.g., CHES), and professional development for all health education specialists.

20.2. **Action Plan: By January 2020,** HPP faculty and staff (i.e., Academic Advisor) will disseminate to students the HPP curriculum goals and intended student learning outcomes. In particular, the Academic Advisor will provide every HPP student with either a hard- or electronic copy of the intended aims of the HPP curriculum, and the suggested sequence of courses (i.e., the HPP Major Academic Plan/MAP). In addition, instructors for professional-development courses offered by HPP will designate in their course syllabi specific course objectives that align with NCHEC competencies. Course syllabi are the basic planning tools and roadmaps to success for both students and faculty: by incorporating specific NCHEC competencies into course syllabi, (a) students will be aware that they will subsequently engage in competency-based application activities aligned with NCHEC standards, and (b) faculty will provide ongoing documentation of student performance based on these standards.

21. Continue to collect benchmark data to monitor improvements in course rigor and extent that NCHEC responsibilities are being adequately covered.

21.1. **Program Response: Agree.** HPP faculty will continue to examine individual courses and the entire curriculum to ensure that student learning outcomes focus on national standards (i.e., responsibilities and competencies verified by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing/NCHEC).

21.2. **Action Plan: Each academic year,** HPP will compile annual evidence of student learning data to determine the degree to which each course within the curriculum is addressing NCHEC standards. This information will be used to validate curricular strengths and identify potential ways in which the curriculum may be further enhanced so that students are equipped with needed professional competencies.

Plans Beyond Review-Team Recommendations

In addition to the action plans previously described in this document to address the recommendations provided by the five-year review team, HPP also has identified a few more select tasks to complete to improve HPP offerings and services. These tasks are identified and briefly described below:

1. **Define service roles for each HPP faculty.** The action plans created by HPP faculty to address the review-team recommendations will necessitate that each faculty member actively and substantively participate in program service. To enhance program efficiency and productivity, by October 2019, each HPP faculty will assume specific service assignments (e.g., BIS coordination, curriculum updates, Gen. Ed. revitalization, strategic planning, student engagement, etc.) and be accountable for completing key program tasks.
2. **Evaluate HPP curriculum and courses to enhance high-impact educational experiences for students.** Although high-impact opportunities for students already exist in the HPP curriculum, by March 2020, HPP faculty will identify ways to increase impact strategies (e.g., performance expectations, practical application) and educational experiences (e.g., evidence-based practices, project-based learning, etc.) utilized in HPP courses to enhance student learning outcomes (e.g., knowledge, skills).
3. **Examine need to expand HPP course offerings at WSU satellite campuses.** HPP currently offers a few lower-division courses (e.g., HLTH 1030) at various WSU satellite campuses (e.g., Davis, West Center), and the WSU Division of Continuing Education has requested these offerings be expanded. By February 2020, HPP faculty will evaluate the student demand and instructional capacity to expand course offerings (e.g., HLTH 1110, HLTH 3400, HLTH 3500) at satellite WSU campuses.
4. **Identify the student learning objectives and outcomes for the Health Promotion Teaching Minor.** In 2018 HPP reinstated the Health Promotion Teaching Minor but—unlike the HPP major, non-teaching minor, and BIS emphasis—HPP has yet to specify the core learning objectives and outcomes to accompany this teaching minor. By April 2020, HPP will (a) identify the necessary knowledge and skills that students can expect to develop (e.g., National Health Education Standards) as a result of this focused program of study, and (b) ensure that the learning outcomes meet the standards specified by the Utah State Board of Education to earn a health education teaching endorsement.
5. **Update the HPP curriculum to align to the new standards of professional preparation forwarded by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC).** Every five years the health education profession performs a national study (currently sponsored by NCHEC and the Society for Public Health Education) to re-verify the core responsibilities and competencies necessary for health education/promotion practice. The most recent practice analysis will be completed in 2020 and, consequently, by March 2021, HPP will reexamine and systematically update course and curricular offerings to ensure students are receiving integrated and coherent learning experiences aligned with the latest standards of professional preparation.