

Jerry and Vickie Moyes College of Education
Health Promotion Program Review

Site visit: February 3, 2014

Response in brown text

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Introduction/Overview:

The Department of Health Promotion and Human Performance (HPHP) in the Jerry and Vickie Moyes College of Education offers programs that promote lifelong wellness from a variety of disciplines. The Health Promotion Program (HPP) is defined within the HPHP Department and given the mission to: (a) prepare students to become professional health educators who can serve in a variety of professional settings, and (b) promote health and prevent disease of health promotion (HP) students, faculty, staff, and Weber's community at large. The HPP cooperates and works closely with Weber's Health Administration Services Department in the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions.

The HPP uses an interdisciplinary model for course offerings and concentrates on articulating its mission and program with standards, competencies, and assessments used by a variety of professional organizations. These include: (a) the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC), the Association for Worksite Health Promotion, (c) the American Public Health Association, (d) the American College Health Association, (e) the Society for Public Health Education, (f) the American College of Sports Medicine, and (g) The American Association of Health Education.

Specific **outcomes** related to the institutional mission of Health Promotion include:

1. Provide students with a foundation in all Seven Areas of Responsibility for Health Education Specialists
2. Provide a Social Science General Education course for the University
3. Provide students with meaningful and mutually beneficial engagements with community partners.

Program Strengths:

1. The site visit team noted that the HP Program had thoroughly articulated its mission with Weber State University's presence in the Ogden community.
2. We noted that there was a full-time academic advisor whom students mentioned frequently as knowledgeable about university and HP Program policies and requirements.
3. HP students, especially, were very complimentary to the faculty, staff, and administration. They described how faculty in the HP Program were passionate and "lived" the concepts that they taught. Moreover, students noted that faculty were considered highly knowledgeable about the topics they taught and faculty response time to emails and voice mails was usually a few hours, even on weekends!

4. HP students also commented on how they appreciated assignment that required them to do class professional presentations. They knew about CHES (Certified Health Education Specialist) and that it was emphasized in the program's classes.
5. The HP Program has mapped out its curriculum and aligned it with specific standards from a variety of learned societies in the Health Promotion arena.
6. The HP Program participates and provides data related to Weber's program review, accreditation, and institutional research divisions.

Program Response: *Considering the Health Promotion Program strengths enumerated by the committee, we will maintain our strong program and excellent commitment to the academic and professional development of our Health Promotion students by remaining focused on the following items: 1) continue strong advisement through one-on-one interactions of students with the program faculty and the department academic advisor; 2) continue to remain on the cutting edge of our discipline and make sure our students sense our passion; 3) continue to provide opportunities for students to practice skills they are learning through presentations, teaching opportunities, and other CHES related activities; 4) continue our strong connections with professional organizations; and 5) continue to develop curriculum based on recommendations from professional organizations.*

Program Challenges:

1. The site review team noted that other Utah institutions have greater number of faculty members to serve similar amounts of HP students. However, all four of Weber's faculty members were tenure-track professors holding terminal degrees in their fields.
 - a. **Program Response: Agree.** At present, the program is at instructional capacity and, periodically, an insufficient number of faculty exist to provide specific content courses (e.g., HLTH 4220, Women's Health Issues) and to teach select professional courses within the School Health Minor (e.g., HLTH 3050, School Health Program).
 - b. **Action Plan: Investigate the practicality of hiring another faculty member.** The HPP will investigate in Fall 2014 the feasibility of hiring an additional tenure-track faculty member to teach courses for the health teaching minor. In the meantime, the HPP will maintain a strong pool of qualified adjunct faculty to meet instructional responsibilities.
 - c. **Assessment Objective:** By December 2014, the HPP faculty will investigate the feasibility of hiring an additional tenure-track faculty member to teach courses in the health teaching minor and other content-specific areas (e.g., Women's Health).
2. Both the site visit team and the HP faculty noted that for some students the CHES certification was very important for their professional careers, while for others, less important. This presents a dilemma: the HP Department has carefully articulated its program to meet CHES competencies, however, some students may not be aware of the significance of the importance of CHES for their future employment.

- a. **Program Response: Agree.** Based on formal exit surveys and informal discussions with students, the HPP faculty have ascertained that not all students majoring in health promotion are interested in seeking national certification as health education specialists. For example, some students are more interested in content-related courses (e.g., Mind-Body Wellness), rather than process-oriented courses (e.g., Health Promotion Research and Assessment) geared toward national certification.
- b. **Action Plan: Senior Exit Survey.** To monitor students' interest in national certification and preferences for specific content- and process-oriented courses, the HPP will administer a biannual senior exit survey to graduating students. The contents of this survey may vary from year to year, but in 2013, a question was added to evaluate the relative importance of the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) exam to students majoring in Health Promotion.
- c. **Assessment Results: Senior Exit Survey.** For the 2013-2014 academic year, results of the Senior Exit Survey revealed that 83% of students anticipated taking the national examination for certification as a health education specialist given by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). This finding suggests most students are aware of both CHES competencies and the importance of national certification. In terms of students' preferred areas of coursework, the exit survey notes a strong interest among students in a Mind-Body Wellness track (42% of respondents), followed by areas of concentration in community/public health (25% of respondents).

Areas Not Meeting Standards:

None observed.

Areas of Some Weakness:

1. HP Students knew about CHES and that it was emphasized in the department's classes, but they felt like they need more information and preparation in order to "sit" for the national exam.
 - a. **Program Response: Agree.** The curricular standards used in the HPP are based on a framework set forth by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). Students graduating with a major in Health Promotion should feel confident and prepared to "sit" for the national certification exam offered by NCHEC.
 - b. **Action Plan: NCHEC-Based Course Objectives.** To assist students to recognize the major areas of responsibility and specific competencies forwarded by NCHEC, instructors in all "Courses Required" for the Health Promotion Major will include in their course syllabi at least 3 course objectives specific to NCHEC competencies (e.g., NCHEC 7.2: *Identify and develop a variety of communication strategies, methods, and techniques*). Course syllabi are the basic planning tools and roadmaps to

success for both students and faculty: by incorporating specific NCHEC competencies into course syllabi, students will subsequently engage in competency-based application activities aligned with NCHEC standards, and faculty will provide ongoing documentation of student performance based on NCHEC standards.

- c. **Assessment Objective:** By September 2014, 80% of the instructors of “Courses Required” for the Health Promotion Major will have syllabi that specifically detail at least 3 course objectives aligned to NCHEC competencies (e.g., NCHEC 7.2: *Identify and develop a variety of communication strategies, methods, and techniques*).
2. HP Students commented that the courses in the program were “low stress” courses. They compared them to other courses on campus like anatomy, physiology, and microbiology and stated that it was a relief to be able to balance those courses with the HP program courses. This may lead to the perception that HP coursework is not challenging compared with other health science departments.
 - a. **Program Response: Disagree.** Although some introductory or elective courses in the program may be considered “low stress” (e.g., with the intent being to attract and recruit students to other courses in the program), the “Courses Required” for the Health Promotion Major are based on national standards (NCHEC) deemed to be academically challenging.
 - b. **Action Plan: Senior Exit Survey.** To monitor students’ beliefs regarding the rigor, difficulty, and academic challenge of courses within the Health Promotion Major, the HPP will administer a biannual senior exit survey to graduating students. The contents of this survey may vary from year to year, but in 2013, questions were added to evaluate among graduates whether “classes in my major were academically challenging” and if “the health promotion program required me to evaluate and solve complex problems.”
 - c. **Assessment Results:** For the 2013-2014 academic year, results of the Senior Exit Survey revealed that a strong majority of students believed that classes within the Health Promotion Major were academically challenging: “Overall the classes in my major were academically challenging” (50% somewhat agree; 33% strong agree). Similarly, 75 percent of students for this academic year believed “The health promotion program required me to evaluate and solve complex problems” (25% somewhat agree; 50% strong agree).

Recommendations for Improvement:

1. We recommend that there be continued emphasis on the primacy of the internship component of the HP program and on its related growth given the competitive nature of the employment market for HP graduates in Utah. There is an increased marketability likely afforded by varied field practicum experiences [**STANDARD G - RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES**]

- a. **Program Response: Agree.** The HP Program considers the internship component of the curriculum to be the culminating experience for HP students. This experience is meant to provide the student with the opportunity to apply skills learned in the classroom in a way that is mutually beneficial for the student and the community/campus partner.
 - b. **Action Plan: Added Rigor.** To ensure high standards associated with internship credit, the HP Program will add additional structure to the experience. In addition to a newly instituted final presentation requirement, in which HP students must formally present their accomplishments over the course of their internship experience, the HP Program will also provide the site supervisors with the opportunity to contribute to the student's HLTH 4860 grade. In prior semesters, students received full credit for the simple completion of the mid-term and final site supervisor evaluations. In future semesters, site supervisors will be provided the opportunity to give a mid-term and final grade, which will contribute (in part) to the student's overall HLTH 4860 grade.
 - c. **Assessment Objectives:** By April 21, 2014, all students enrolled in HLTH 4860 will be required to formally present their internship experience in a structured format (i.e., oral, poster, or video presentation). This new requirement will be carried forward in all subsequent semesters. By May 5, 2014 (the beginning of the summer 2014 semester), the opportunity for site supervisors to directly contribute to student grades through the mid-semester and final site supervisor evaluations will be incorporated into the syllabus and Canvas site for HLTH 4860 in the summer semester. This new requirement will be carried forward in all subsequent semesters.

2. We recommend increased faculty promotion of student memberships in HP-related national and state organizations (e.g., Health Education Assoc. of Utah—HEAU) as an additional means of fostering students' professional development [STANDARD G - RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES]
 - a. **Program Response: Agree.** The HP Program faculty see significant value in student membership in, and involvement with, both national and state health promotion organizations. In both foundational and upper-division courses, HP students are both formally and informally encouraged by faculty to learn more about (and consider membership in) the various national and state health promotion organizations.
 - b. **Action Plan: Support for Conference Attendance/Student Membership.** The HP Program will explore adding a course fee on to the senior seminar class to pay for the student's annual membership in the Health Education Association of Utah (HEAU) or students will be encouraged to start their own HP club and raise funds for membership dues; an HP faculty member will serve as their advisor. In addition, two mechanisms exist (HLTH 2920 and HLTH 4920) in which students could potentially receive credit for attendance and presenting at state conferences. However, until additional faculty positions in the HP program, it will not be feasible to offer these classes.

- c. **Assessment Objectives:** By December 2014, HP faculty will finalize a mechanism for students to obtain academic credit for attendance and presentation at a state conference. Currently the office of undergraduate research and the Moyes College of Education endowment fund student travel to conferences for presentations with a faculty member. By December 2015, HP faculty will attempt to present with selected exceptional students at one state or regional conference annually.
3. We commend existing and encourage continued HP collaboration and service involvements across the campus community (e.g., collaborations with the Counseling & Psychological Services Center, Student Wellness Program, Integrated Studies Program), as such involvements are viewed as valued partnerships within the University community [**STANDARD G - RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES**]
 - a. **Program Response: Agree.** The HP Program has many strong community and campus partners that provide relevant, hands-on, service-oriented internship experiences for HP students.
 - b. **Action Plan: Support for Conference Attendance/Student Membership.** The HP faculty will continue to nurture existing relationships with on-campus partners to ensure that the placement of student interns at their sites is beneficial for all involved.
 - c. **Assessment Objective:** During each academic semester, HP faculty, with the support of the HPHP internship coordinator, will obtain feedback from each on-campus internship site supervisor about both the needs of that site, and, the quality of the current student interns.
4. We recommend periodic assessment of the prospective need for additional full-time faculty to meet the growing segment of HP student majors at WSU, with continued attention and commitment to matching the various elements of diversity represented within both the student population and surrounding communities [**STANDARD E – FACULTY**]

See “Program Challenges” response 1 on page 2.
5. We recommend continued efforts to base HP’s academic curriculum and related student learning objectives on national standards (benchmarks) within the area of health promotion, adapting to the changing landscape within the profession as needed per faculty’s exhibited commitment to linking student learning with professional practice [**STANDARD B – CURRICULUM / STANDARD C - STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**].

See “Areas of Some Weakness” response 1 on page 3
6. We recommend continued support (e.g., allocation of time and necessary resources) for assisting students in preparation for the CHES (Certified Health Educator Specialist) examination to increase the percentage of students who pass the CHES examination both at and beyond the 70% cutoff score [**STANDARD C - STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**]

- a. **Program Response: Agree.** The curricular standards used in the HPP are based on a framework set forth by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). Given that approximately 70 percent of individuals who qualify and sit for the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) examination receive certification, a similar success rate should be seen among WSU students who take the exam.
- b. **Action Plan/Assessment Results: CHES Exam Preparation.** To increase the percentage of WSU students who pass the CHES exam, the HPP will pursue the following objectives:
 - i. By September 2014, 80% of the instructors of “Courses Required” for the Health Promotion Major will have syllabi that specifically detail at least 3 course objectives aligned to NCHEC competencies (e.g., NCHEC 7.2: *Identify and develop a variety of communication strategies, methods, and techniques*);
 - ii. By March 2015, program faculty will investigate the interest and utility of formal study groups (facilitated through the HLTH 4990 course, Senior Seminar) for students interested in taking the CHES exam;
 - iii. By December 2015, HPP faculty will use results from the Senior Exit Survey (e.g., percentage of students who anticipate taking the national examination for certification as a health education specialist given by the NCHEC) to determine whether the format and content of HLTH 4990 (Senior Seminar) will be changed to allow a greater focus on CHES preparation. (At present, only two weeks in HLTH 4990 are devoted toward CHES preparation and, possibly, an increase in course credit from 1-credit hours to 2-credit hours may be necessary to prepare students to sit for the CHES exam.)

In addition to the aforementioned Action Plans and Assessment Objectives, the HP Program has the intention of engaging in two additional Action Plans with associated Assessment Objectives:

Action Plan 1: In order to maintain and build upon the existing relationship between the two Health Promotion majors (one in the College of Education, the other in the College of Health Professions - Health Administration Service (HAS)), the HP Program intends on instituting an annual retreat with all HP and HAS faculty. These annual retreats will allow for open dialogue between the two sets of faculty in order to review existing curriculum and policies and to discuss the continued success of the HP majors.

Assessment Objective: By the end of the spring 2015 semester, a retreat will be held with both HP and HAS faculty to discuss the HP majors.

Action Plan 2: The HP Program places great value on its relationships with its varied community and campus partners. In order to maintain and build upon those relationships, a survey will be administered among those partners every two years. This survey will

attempt to measure the needs of the campus and community partners, and, satisfaction with the existing partnership.

Assessment Objective: By the end of the summer 2015 semester, the first survey will be administered among the HP Program's current community and campus partners (i.e., has served as an internship site within the past two academic years).

Conclusions and Team Comments:

We commend the Health Promotions Department for their demonstrated commitment to incorporating national standards into their program's development. We noted HP students were highly complimentary of HP faculty and felt genuine appreciation for both faculty knowledge and support. HP students benefit from knowledgeable staff who thoroughly understand University and program policies and procedures.

We additionally noted prospective areas where the HP department could further strengthen students' familiarity with the CHES certification and enhance promotion of internships that have the potential to help HP students gain meaningful employment.

The site visit team is complimentary of the HP program overall and anticipates further refinement of its program by implementing the offered suggestions, as appropriate. Lastly, please know that we are proud to be your colleagues and admire both your dedication and commitment to improving your program!

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