

Weber State University Department of Health Sciences Program Response to Site Visit Report

The Weber State University (WSU) Department of Health Sciences was proud to showcase its program as part of a formal institutional program review. The Department of Health Sciences maintains a high quality program that focuses on qualified faculty, well-designed curriculum, organization, efficient delivery, and multiple levels of assessment. The program would also like to acknowledge the qualified reviewers and their valuable expertise provided in this process.

One of the main missions of the Department of Health Sciences (HTHS) is to provide the foundational courses for successful completion and acceptance to the programs within the Dumke College of Health Professions. In addition, the HTHS program provides the opportunity for students to earn a valuable Associate of Science degree as they complete their general education courses and seek admission into other various Health Professions programs. To assist students with timely completion of their education, HTHS maintains the high standards established by the university to provide life science General Education credit to students who complete HTHS 1110 – Integrated Human Anatomy and Physiology. These principles are summarized in the HTHS mission statement.

The department received commendations for their standardized curriculum. Each departmental course has established learning objectives that are shared across all sections; standardized departmental assessments are shared as well. This way, departments evaluating students for the extremely competitive health professions programs can accurately compare students' grades, knowing that all students received a grade based on the same policies and course expectations.

The Dumke College of Health Professions provides exceptional advising resources for HTHS students. The advising department is well respected by students, and students have the availability to schedule their advisement appointments any time during their academic career. To further increase the effectiveness for Health Professions students, an additional adviser is being hired for academic year 2016-17. Ideally, this will lead to a full-time adviser at the Davis Campus.

Qualified departmental faculty was identified as a strength in the HTHS program. The departmental faculty come from diverse academic and clinical backgrounds that include: neuroscience, clinical microbiology, clinical immunology, and pharmacology. Faculty morale is currently at a very high level within the department, and each member is committed to sustaining that standard and continually growing and developing for the better of the department and our students

As for the faculty, the departmental support staff were commended for their key role in the department. HTHS delivers courses through face-to-face, online, independent study, and concurrent enrollment populations. This puts a large workload on support staff

due to the high volume of students and instructors, but they perform at a level that exceeds expectations.

The review committee identified three areas that should be addressed by the department. The first was the lack of physical space. The HTHS department works with a very large population of WSU students; lecture sections of a given course can house over 400 registered students at a time, but the lab space only allows 30 students to participate at a time. This requires the department to hold 18-20, two-hour lab sessions per week. Although the lab space can seat 30 students, providing efficient and successful hands-on activities and experiences with cadaver materials can be a challenge. The college and university should continue to look for funding sources to assist in the increase of physical space for the College of Health Professions as program needs continue to grow.

To further assist with the space limitations, the department was encouraged by the program review committee to hire laboratory aides to assist the lab instructors and to help with laboratory session efficiency. These individuals will primarily aide lab instructors with classroom activities and assignments. The department will petition the Dean for additional instructional wages to help meet this need. Qualified lab aides will be recruited from the junior and senior classes of the Health Professions programs.

A second concern addressed by the committee and the Department of Health Sciences, comes from the missing-student population as students are not accepted into their programs. Currently, the percentage of students not gaining acceptance into the College of Health Professions programs is around 70-80%. Through advising and tracking efforts, the Health Sciences (HTHS) program would like to target this group in a number of ways: first, encourage them to complete their AS degree in Health Sciences; second, increase advising efforts to provide students with exposure to other programs at WSU; and third, pursue the development of a BS degree in Health Sciences. All three of these initiatives will assist the university with the 1st year return rate, student retention, and the 6-year graduation rate. With the number of students that take HTHS classes, the department has the capability of reaching and retaining a large population of students. This in turn, can and will benefit the university as a whole.

Lastly, the review committee recommended that the HTHS program establish an external advisory committee. This will be very important as the department seeks to place both our AS and BS degree level students in the work force. These students will be a competitive choice and will be able to fill the many entry-level non-credentialed positions in the healthcare industry. Additionally, graduating BS degree students will also qualify to apply for the many diverse graduate programs. The department will seek counsel outside the university, as it will be a very important key for this to succeed.

The Department of Health Sciences would like to thank everyone that contributed to this review. The information provided is very valuable and will contribute to the growth of the Health Sciences program going forward.