

Formal Narrative Report of the Program Review Committee to the Administration at Weber State University and the Dumke College of Health Professions Administration on the Evaluation of the Health Sciences Department Program

An Evaluation of the Weber State University Health Sciences Program was conducted on March 23, 2016 by a committee comprised of:

Rodney Hansen (Chair)	Department of Athletic Training and Nutrition, Weber State University
Kathleen Cadman	School of Nursing, Weber State University
JoAnn Fenn	Department of Pathology, Medical Laboratory Science Division, University of Utah School of Medicine
Roger Bounds	Chair, Department of Health Sciences, Northern Arizona University

This review is based on the program's self-study document and interviews with persons involved in the various components of the program. This report represents the committee's findings and are outlined as ratings and comments as outlined in Weber State University's program review evaluation criteria.

A. Mission Statement

The mission statement was not discussed by the committee, but was reviewed by each member of the committee from the Self Study Report Provided

Strengths: Strong statement that clearly describes the overall and compelling mission of the Health Sciences Department.

Challenges: NA

Weaknesses: It includes descriptive information about courses that is not usually part of a mission statement. The following is a suggestion that includes most of the current mission statement.

“The mission of the Health Sciences Department in the Dumke College of Health Professions is to provide the foundational course work needed for successful completion of Health Science Degrees and other Health Professions Degrees and to assist students in developing the learning and professional skills and values required for the health professions.”

NOTE: The following verbiage was deleted: “The course work is provided in multiple formats with measurable student learning outcomes for all sectors of the

population. The courses are designed..” “The rigor of the courses also prepares students for majors throughout the university.”

B. Curriculum

Strengths: The department clearly has thoughtfully developed a curriculum that is consistent from semester to semester, from instructor to instructor that provides the kind of background knowledge needed for students to progress into nursing, medical laboratory science, radiology, dental hygiene, respiratory therapy, etc. There is also flexibility for students needing special projects or directed readings, where both student and faculty member benefit from this type of independent study coursework.

Challenges: A faculty member will have 500+ students in a given semester, and will teach both on-line in in-person courses at the same time. Up to 80% of students taught are NOT accepted into a B.S. degree health science program, which is a significant concern for the faculty. Appropriately, they are looking at development of a meaningful B.S. program as another option for many students.

Potential collaboration with other programs in other WSU colleges may also address this 80% of students. This in itself may be a challenge.

Weakness: The laboratory space is inadequate and there are not enough laboratory aides for each laboratory session. This diminishes the ability of students to learn all that is expected so this issue has a direct impact on planning the laboratory curriculum. While existing faculty are commended for their efforts to use innovative scheduling and teaching techniques to accommodate a large number of students in laboratory activities, additional space is clearly needed.

C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments

Strengths: Outstanding planning and implementation of lectures and laboratory sessions. Exam questions are linked to specific objectives so expectations and content knowledge are clear for students. The consistency and comprehensiveness of learning outcome assessment practice in the department is noteworthy. Buy in from all faculty is present and structure is in place to document student performance for all learning outcomes. This is not common at other universities.

The Dean is very familiar with the objectives of the curriculum, and especially with popular courses including the Anatomy and Physiology course. The Dean has a clear and open communication with faculty regarding curriculum development and sustainability.

Students have a very clear sense of the expectations of faculty. Students seem very comfortable with how the curriculum is taught and assessed and feel the faculty have a vested interest in their education. The investment in and the addition of plasticized cadavers is an asset to the student learning process. Students reported high expectations from faculty, but also suggested they felt supported and were provided enough resources to be successful.

Challenges: There are not enough laboratory aides to assist in all labs, which means that the laboratory instructor must oversee students performing procedures in the wet lab, completing computer assignments in the computer laboratory, and observing images and working with anatomic parts in another area. Since laboratory instruction is integral to the coursework and learning outcomes, it is imperative that more laboratory aides be hired to meet the demand. We recommended increasing hourly pay to make the position more attractive.

Weaknesses: See comments under “Challenges”.

D. Academic Advising

Strengths: Exceptional program in place with three full time advisors and one newly hired advisor. The advising is done in-person, on-line, and over the phone, so students have multiple options for getting information. The advising appears to be well structured and provides planning not only for courses but also for applying to health science programs and even career counseling.

Students feel advising is very good and that advisors are engaged in the students’ academic progression. Students feel that advisors were well informed and approachable, with special cases being well addressed, and students feel that they receive help with getting into programs.

Challenges: With a newly hired advisor “coming on board”, there was a question about space. There is not enough space for this person to be housed with the other three advisors, and it was not yet decided for certain where this person will be located. There was talk about the DATC (?) but nothing was decided.

Weaknesses: None observed

E. Faculty

Strengths: Impressive faculty who are committed to teaching at a high and innovative level. They have appropriate credentials and their professional experiences strengthen the credibility of the department at the university, regionally and nationally. They are motivated to conduct research as time permits, which is encouraged and supported.

The faculty are respectful of one another and of their students. The faculty teaching loads are high, but the morale and collegiality was also very high. The adjunct faculty feel accepted and included in the department, and they are equally dedicated and enjoy the opportunities to teach.

Challenges: Space in the laboratory areas of the department. This has been a consistent theme and challenge. It should be noted that the equipment and technology deployed in labs is high quality and well utilized to meet needs. It is the actual space available that is a limiting factor.

Weaknesses: None observed

F. Staff and Other Support

Strengths: The department enjoys wonderful, professional support from its administrative assistant, secretaries, advisors and dedicated librarian. There is a commitment to providing laboratory and demonstration equipment (especially for anatomy) including the simulation table, and computer labs, which are all used daily.

Adjunct faculty, staff, and other support feel they contribute and are valued by tenure track faculty, students, and College of Health Sciences Administration.

Challenges: They hope to add to their collection of anatomical models, etc. to enhance the learning experience for the students. The reviewers strongly recommend that the department receive the appropriate monetary support to do this.

Weaknesses: The laboratory areas are too small; the department needs more space.

G. Relationships with External Communities

The WSU Department of Health Sciences currently has no defined role in the external community.

This standard was not discussed during our review. The documents we received stated that there is not a Program Advisory Committee, which is usually a requirement of programs that must meet accreditation guidelines. This department is not affiliated with an accrediting body.

Recommendation: The department may want to explore development of a PAC, which could provide unique opportunities for fund raising, equipment resources, and ideas for meaningful B.S. program in the Health Science Department. Establishing a mechanism to obtain feedback from external community stakeholders can be a useful tool for curriculum revision.

H. Results of Previous Program Reviews

This is the first program review of the Department of Health Sciences. There are no previous reviews to address.

Other Comments:

A common concern by this committee is the lack of physical space and facilities. It is noted that the faculty and staff are utilizing what they do have to greatest extent possible to the benefit of the students. To address this need, this committee recognized that the Dean of the College of Health Sciences is seeking resource for expansion of facilities. Given the quality of education provided, and the number of students this program and the college of Health Sciences serve, it is hoped that the WSU administration recognizes the importance of giving high priority to the facility needs, and providing utmost assistance to the Dean in securing funding of facilities.

The faculty acknowledge and are serving and addressing the “eighty-percent student” or the student that may complete the associate degrees of this program, but may not be academically competitive to advance to a health related four year degree. The committee hopes that other Weber State University academic entities recognize the potential for growth that this situation offers, especially in the teacher education, health promotion, athletic therapy, and other programs housed in other departments and colleges at Weber State University.

Regards,

Rodney Hansen
Chair, Health Sciences Program Review Committee