**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2011-12**

**Department:** Computer Information Systems (CIS)

**Date of Review:** November 2, 2012

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Roger Abernathy, Associate Professor, Mathematics

Phyllis Adams, Associate Professor, Child & Family Education

Angie Arnold, Chair, Radiologic Technology

Jared Cutler, Director, Curriculum and Assessment

Karl Konsdorf, Manager of Research Analytics & Reporting

David Krasofsky, Manager Information Technology Services, and Manager Systems and

Network Administration

Matt Massie, Manager, Career Services

Meredith Rainey, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

Shari Rethman, Chair, Design

Lori Zakel, Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication and Social Sciences

**Department Members Present:**

Sue Merrell-Daley, Dean, Business and Public Services

Reece Newman, Chair, Computer Information Systems

Faculty/Staff:

Ali, Mohamed

Anton Bruckner

Michelle Cheatham

Joe Lammers

Jill Oldham

Patty Santoianni

Bob Sherman

Jerry Snyder

Martha Taylor

**Commendations**:

* This is a department that does a tremendous amount of work – there are seven programs and sixteen certificates in this program, the department maintains close connection to industry and to the community, and does so with a fixed amount of bandwidth. Moreover, in a fast-changing field the department does an excellent job of staying current with emerging trends and technologies. This is a department that is able to do so much with the limited resources that it has.
* The overall student-centeredness of the program was very apparent in the self-study. During the meeting with the review team the question was asked “How does the department prioritize its efforts”, and there was no hesitation in the response: “We put student learning above all else”. The department’s dedication to and prioritization of student learning is to be commended.
* This is a department with excellent faculty, several of whom have been recognized with awards, and who exhibit a high level of engagement and activity with industry and the community.
* The department should be commended in its work with the Students Correcting Open-door PC Emergencies (SCOPE) office – this is a service that saves students tens of thousands of dollars, while also providing valuable applied experience for students in the program.
* The department’s overall approach to the Program Review process was exemplary – it was clear that the department took the opportunity to “go deep” and take a thoughtful, reflective look at itself, what it is doing well, and where improvements can be made. The review team appreciated the candor the department displayed in the self-study, the willingness to be very forthcoming about areas where improvements could be made. It was evident that the entire department was involved in the development of the self-study. The process was extremely well-documented. Finally, the department produced a list of improvements that could be made in the next self-study, and it is hoped that they will use this list in five years when the department is again up for Program Review. It is suggested that when the times comes, the department consider conferring with academic advising early in the self-study process to avail themselves of the information and perspective the advisors can provide.
* The department did an excellent job documenting how they had addressed review team recommendations from the last Program Review. It was clear that the department had taken the recommendations seriously, and could demonstrate the progress that had been made in meeting them.
* The use of course coordinators is commendable – it provides a connection point for students in the various programs that the department offers.
* Noting that local employers had indicated that there was room for improvement with graduates’ “soft skills”, the department implemented some changes to develop these skills to a greater extent in their graduates (more group work, more team activities, more ethics discussions, etc., in upper level courses). This kind of responsiveness to feedback from employers is commendable, and indicates that the department takes this feedback seriously.
* The department’s involvement in the $12 million dollar Department of Labor “Adapting and Adopting Competency-based IT Instruction to Accelerate Learning for TAA-eligible and Adult Learners” grant for development of competency based education puts the department in the forefront of educational innovation.
* The CIS Capstone General Education Writing Assignment is an excellent example of assessment performed by the department, and should serve as a model for other similar assessment activities the department might undertake.

**Recommendations for Action**:

* Most of the data provided in the self-study regarding assessment were course success rates. While this can be a valuable data point, assessment data needs to be more focused and targeted. Course success rates do not provide much data regarding how well specific outcomes in the course are being met. Other assessment strategies need to be developed. As the department noted in its self-study, “A consistent assessment for every faculty to use for all courses is needed for general education outcomes. Consistent collection of these results would be helpful to identify areas of improvement.” The department is encouraged to develop a formal assessment plan that specifies the exams, assignments, and activities in classes that will be used to demonstrate that students are achieving general education and program outcomes. Thought will need to be given to how data will be collected, analyzed, and reported. It was mentioned in the review team meeting that the department is talking about developing pre/post measures for program outcomes – it is also recommended that the department move toward development of these measures.
* The department is responsible for overseeing a large number of academic programs. Where possible, it is beneficial to students for degree programs to be as short as possible without sacrificing quality and the ability to prepare students for transfer or employment. It is recommended that the department review its academic programs to explore whether there are opportunities for trimming credit hours, although it is emphasized that lowering program credit hours should never be done in a way that would compromise the preparation of our graduates.
* Related to exploring whether degree programs should be shortened, it is also recommended that the department work to be sure its programs are current and are preparing students adequately for the types of jobs they will be applying for at the time they leave Sinclair.
* The adjunct mentoring program that the department has under development has the potential to have a great impact on adjuncts. It is recommended that the department pursue this program and provide updates through the Annual Update process every year on how well it is working.
* There are a number of higher education competitors for this department – the department should carefully examine these competitors and think about ways that they could increase their market share by attracting students to Sinclair instead of these competitors. This would be beneficial for both the department and the students who would be recruited who would have otherwise gone to other educational providers.
* The department has an aggressive Action Plan – however, given that there are constraints in terms of the resources that can be devoted to its activities, it is recommended that the department formalize priorities that it will focus on in terms of implementation of the Action Plan. This is also true of the degree programs that the department is considering developing – since new degree development is a time consuming process, it is recommended that the department prioritize development of one or two degree programs it feels would be most likely to lead to gainful employment for students in areas where there are great opportunities for employment.
* The department has done a good job of keeping up with trends in the field, and the department is encouraged to continue to look at emerging technologies and trends and to explore developing courses and programs in response where appropriate.
* With the current emphasis on completion at the institution, the department is encouraged to make sure that its activities are well aligned with Sinclair’s and the state’s completion goals, and that the department is actively working to increase completion rates.

**Overall Assessment of Department’s Progress and Goals**:

There are so many impressive things being done by this department – the department oversees an unusually large number of degree and certificate programs in a fast-moving and rapidly changing field, maintains close connections with the community and local industry, is a key player in the largest grant Sinclair has ever received, and even helps run a service for computer repair for students free of charge. Due to the comprehensive approach taken with the self-study, the high level of department activity and the extreme dedication of the faculty were highlighted.

The candor of the self-study also helped make clear that this is a department that knows where improvements could be made, and it is taking steps to make those improvements. There is every reason to expect that in the next Program Review self-study the department will be able to describe substantive progress on making those improvements in these areas.

This is a department that is keenly attuned to finding opportunities for its students – and it would appear that this represents one of the potential problems the department may face: it is discussing so many initiatives and is exploring so many possibilities for new programs, and since there are only so many faculty members with only so much time there is a real danger that the department may begin to spread itself too thin. As noted in the recommendations, the department needs to take a thoughtful, strategic, deliberate approach to prioritizing its activities, and must have the discipline to remain focused on those priorities it has chosen.

**Institutional or Resource Barriers to the Department’s Ability to accomplish its Goals, if any**:

While this is not by any means a barrier, the emphasis put on completion by Completion by Design and other initiatives should serve as a guide in helping the department prioritize its activities, as should be the case institution-wide. Also, funding is likely to remain a concern for the foreseeable future at the institution, and the department will need to pay close attention to budget issues, particularly in light of some of the initiatives it might undertake and the costs that might be incurred as a result. Another institutional barrier is funding for discipline-specific training and development, which is particularly important in this fast-moving field. Also, as is the case with all other departments at the institution, the centralization of marketing means that departments will need to find new, innovative ways of attracting students to their programs.