**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2014-15**

**Department:** Dietetics Technology (DIT)

**Date of Review:** April 23, 2015

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Bobby Beavers, Coordinator, Center for Student Success

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Jennifer Dalton, Director, Didactic Program in Dietetics, School of Education & Health Sciences,

University of Dayton

David Ericson, Associate Professor, Mathematics

Kjirsten Goeller, Professor, Developmental Language Arts

Kyle Jones, Assistant Professor, Computer Information Systems

Keri Nunn-Ellison, Division Assessment Coordinator, Health Sciences

Shari Rethman, Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication, and Social Sciences

Patricia Willis, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

David Clark, Assistant Professor/Chair, Dietetics Technology

Faculty:

Nora Schaefer

COMMENDATIONS:

* The Review Team was impressed by the many remarkable things that such a small department has been able to accomplish. The breadth and depth of the work that is done by just two people is nothing short of amazing. In terms of teamwork and a culture of intradepartmental collaboration, this is a department that is truly unsurpassed. This sense of teamwork made a recent leadership transition incredibly smooth and seamless. The two full-time faculty who comprise this department are energetic, positive, and create a synergy that is truly unique. The phrase used by the Review Team was that the faculty are “in sync”, and that is an excellent way to describe the unity of purpose and action that occurs in this department. Without question, the department underestimates itself – while it may feel that the things it does in preparing students and serving the community are commonplace, in fact they are anything but. This department probably doesn’t realize how good they are, and have become so accustomed to the high standards they have set that they don’t even recognize how high those standards truly are.
* This is a department that is “plugged in” to external stakeholders in a way that few departments on campus can approach. Both faculty members maintain external employment that allows them to develop strong relationships and stay abreast of developments in the field. They have an unparalleled level of awareness and knowledge of current trends in their field, which is important given the current pace of change in the field and large scope of the potential changes that are looming. The strong connections to external stakeholders and the Dietetics community at large is highly commendable.
* An outgrowth of these strong connections to industry is the cultivation of a reputation for high quality in the community. The department has earned the praise of those in the field, and is known for producing top-notch graduates both in the workplace and at transfer institutions.
* The department has done a superb job of designing an Associate of Applied Science degree program that prepares graduates to enter the workforce, but that also has strong, strategic articulation agreements that enable other graduates to transfer to four-year institutions and earn baccalaureate degrees. This is not an easy balance to strike, it is rare to see a program that serves both purposes so well.
* This department provides an excellent example of inter-departmental – and in fact cross-divisional - collaboration in its relationships with the Hospitality Management program. The sharing of resources and use of courses between the two programs is all the more impressive considering that they are housed in completely different divisions. These collaborations between DIT and HMT serve as a model of how other departments at Sinclair could develop similar relationships, and reflects well on both of these departments.
* Measurable outcomes and common assignments have put in place a structure that supports a robust, comprehensive approach to assessment. It is clear that the department is utilizing the data from this assessment work, and uses it to help them know where their challenges are and what decisions they must wrestle with.
* Many departments would like to increase their use of Service Learning, but struggle with finding projects that provide opportunities for service while still relating to course content. This department has it figured out – they are able to provide Service Learning experiences for their students that enhance and expand on classroom content, while at the same time meeting real community needs. The department’s adoption of Service Learning, and the way it has become incorporated and embedded into their course offerings, merit high commendations. The phrase the department used during the meeting with the Review Team is that they have “weaved it into their courses” and this is a fitting description of how enmeshed Service Learning has become in their courses.
* In the self-study and the discussion with the Review Team, the department was very transparent – the Review Team didn’t feel like they held anything back, and along with some very impressive accomplishments they were quite willing to talk about opportunities for improvement in the department and potential threats they need to be aware of. The discussion was very genuine, open and honest.
* While this was not discussed during the Review Team meeting, the department has a personalized, one-on-one approach to working with students who are struggling in their program that is highly commendable. It is clear that they want all of their students to succeed, and will do all in their power to make that happen.
* This department is housed in a division that is known for having cohort-based programs where students move lockstep through the curriculum. While without question there are advantages to that approach, this department has managed to create a cohesive, student-friendly environment while allowing students to progress through the program at their own pace. They have many of the advantages of the cohort programs, while still allowing their students flexibility.
* This is a department with tremendous problem-solving abilities, and one that shows a great deal of creativity in the way it employs those abilities. The Review Team was so impressed with the Dietetic Preceptor Appreciation Luncheon and Workshop – with a single activity, the department showcased student skills and achievement, strengthened community relationships, provided CEUs to attendees, and provided an event recognizing the services of its preceptors.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

* The department presented a good list of goals in Section V.c. of the self-study – however, some of them could be more measurable than they are, and consolidating some of them might allow for more focused efforts at achieving them. The department is encouraged to consolidate these goals where appropriate, perhaps reducing from seven goals to three or four, and ensure that these smaller set of goals are stated in ways that are explicitly measurable. While they should be stated briefly and concisely, the goals should also provide the reader with some idea of how the department will know whether or not they have been met.
* One of the many impressive things about this department is its cross-divisional collaboration with the Hospitality Management Program. The work that is done jointly with these two departments is exemplary. Can it be taken to an even higher level? Could the linkages be even stronger than they are? Could this be used to address some of the issues surrounding the Dietary Manager program? Are there courses and certificates that might be developed that would meet the needs of both programs? Are there ways of incorporating more DIT content into HMT courses and vice versa?
* The department is encouraged to be very mindful – and cautious – in interpreting the large amounts of data it collects. Data in small departments such as this one are extremely sensitive to the results of individual students, it is relatively easy for one or two students to skew the data due to the small number of students. Failure to take this into account could potentially lead to programmatic changes that are unnecessary, and may in fact be problematic. The department is strongly encouraged to maintain this sense of perspective in analyzing its data.
* Does the Affordable Care Act create the need for new certificates? What opportunities might come from this?
* Since there appear to be a number of students who transfer prior to completing the degree, the Review Team recommends that the department explore reverse transfer as a means of capturing completions for students who have transferred.
* There was an extensive discussion in the meeting with the Review Team regarding the national exam review course. Evidently some students are not taking advantage of the course due to having to pay for a one credit hour course that is not covered by financial aid. The department should explore the various options for increasing student participation in the course, whether that involves creating a non-credit review course that is offered at a lower rate, whether the exam review is built into an existing course in the program, whether scholarships might somehow cover the review course and/or the exam itself, etc. – the department is encouraged to generate a number of different options, research them thoroughly, and select the best one to increase the number of students taking advantage of the review opportunity.
* This is a high functioning department – it should be sharing best practices with other departments. There are several potential best practices that could be shared in Fall Faculty Professional Development Day and other venues – the holistic faculty advising model, the department’s Service Learning work, the Dietetic Preceptor Appreciation Luncheon, the cross-divisional collaboration with HMT, etc. The department is strongly encouraged to select one or two of these best practices and share them with the College via a workshop or other type of presentation.
* The Review Team feels that the department may at times be hesitant to share its needs with division and other administrative leadership – the department is encouraged to be willing to ask for support when appropriate, and be clear about the support it needs to reach its goals.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENT’S PROGRESS AND GOALS:

This is truly a remarkable department, one that is doing so many impressive things, one whose faculty have such a positive attitude and strong commitment to their students. Even so, it is a department whose faculty are humble, who look past the great things they are already doing to seek additional opportunities to serve their students. The faculty clearly enjoy what they are doing and have a love for the work that they do. The dynamics in this department are excellent – it is hard to imagine two faculty members who could work together with any greater unity of purpose and overall cohesion than the ones in this department. They are experienced, knowledgeable, and their skills extend beyond the traditional limits of their discipline. Their engagement with external stakeholders is outstanding, they work hard to maintain the external connections that are an immeasurable benefit to their students. The Review Team was very, very impressed by what they saw in this Program Review.

INSTITUTIONAL OR RESOURCE BARRIERS TO THE DEPARTMENT’S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS, IF ANY:

* This department grapples with issues surrounding administrative support, since it shares an administrative assistant with another department. It appears in this instance a workable solution has been implemented whereby the administrative assistant divides time between both departments that are served. As budgets become increasingly tight, Sinclair may need to explore using this model in other departments.
* Many Health Sciences departments have national exams – this department has extensive experience in preparing students for those exams, although it has been given a recommendation to explore how this could be changed to benefit more students. The model that emerges from this may help inform the efforts of other Health Sciences departments to prepare their graduates.
* This department is one of a limited number of programs that was allowed to drop the Communication requirement – all such departments will need to develop and implement rigorous, comprehensive approaches to developing oral communication skills in their students and assessing whether they are achieving those skills using measurable outcomes.
* This department, like others, has considered expansion to Courseview Campus and other locations. Departments considering this move need to receive direction regarding marketing and recruitment in order for program offerings at these locations to succeed.