**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2017-18**

**Department:** HIM

**Date of Review:** March 23, 2018

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Derek Allen, Chair, Hospitality Management

Michelle Abreu, Assistant Professor, Respiratory Care, Division Assessment Coordinator

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Tony Ponder, Dean, Science, Mathematics, and Engineering

Jennifer Kostic, Associate Provost

Ryan Murphy, Professor, Business Information Systems

Angie Didier, Research, Analytics, and Reporting

Vandana Rola, Manager, eCourse Design and Development

Dawayne Kirkman, Director, Student Affairs

Troy Singleton, Associate Professor, Automotive Technology

Amanda Hayden, Assistant Professor, Religion/Humanities/Philosophy

Kara Landis, Executive Administrative Assistant, Provost’s Office

Joellen Steele, Director, Academic Advisor

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

**Department Members Present:**

Karen Motley, Chairperson, Health Information Management

Faculty and Staff:

Christine Steineman  
Claudia Potts  
Bernie McStay  
Renee Schmitz

**Commendations:**

* The Review Team was so impressed by the spirit of comradery, teamwork, and even friendship that exists in this department. It is a remarkable thing to see a department that works in such an environment of mutual respect, appreciation, and collaboration. Each faculty member plays a key role in maintaining this atmosphere within the department, and the department certainly benefits from strong leadership from a chairperson who is widely respected across the college for her sound judgment and leadership abilities. In the Health Information Management department faculty are there to support each other, ensuring that no one falls or gets left behind. There are few departments at Sinclair that can boast such a complete climate of mutual appreciation and unity.
* In addition to being a high-functioning department in terms of relationships among faculty in the department, it is also a department that goes above and beyond in terms of helping students reach their educational goals. This is evident from the time that students first enter their cohorts in the program, as the department chairperson meets with each student individually for an hour to communicate the expectations of the program and plan out courses for the next two years for the student. Even completely online students get an hour with the chairperson via Adobe Connect. While this is a substantial commitment of time on the part of the department chairperson, it clearly pays dividends in terms of getting students started on the right foot, with a clear plan to completion. After this initial one-on-one contact, a program orientation, delivered in both face-to-face and online, builds further connections between the department and its students, and reinforces expectations in the program.
* Well after that initial high-touch approach taken by the department, faculty continue to go the extra mile in serving students. Innovative approaches have been taken in making faculty available online for student questions and discussion once a week, in addition to faculty being available in person once a week in department labs on campus. Opportunities are provided for learning outside of classes, and in some cases opportunities for learning in other countries, with department-led excursions for students to Guatemala and Scotland. This extra time and effort from faculty speaks to their dedication to helping their students succeed. This department is extremely student-centered.
* The pass rates on the RHIT exam are exceptional, 90% compared to the national average of 67%. The department also takes great pains to prepare its students for employer examinations. The evidence indicates that the department does a phenomenal job of preparing its students for the testing they will face after graduation but prior to employment, and for their subsequent careers.
* What a data-rich self-study! Few self-studies have as much data, and in as much detail, as this one. But what is more impressive, besides the high volume of data provided, that data was often used to demonstrate effectiveness of strategies to increase completion, retention, and access for students. This is a department that clearly uses data to assess the effectiveness of its strategies for improving outcomes for students, and provides an excellent example of good quality improvement practices.
* Recognizing that students were being lost due to the length of the waiting list, the department proactively implemented strategies to reduce time on the wait list and get more students into their programs, successfully reducing the wait list time by half, from three years to one and a half. The development of both local and remote cohorts was an innovative and creative approach for getting more students into the program and reducing time on the waitlist, and the department is to be commended for its work in that regard. Without question, there are students who would have gone elsewhere if not for this strategy.
* The department also removed restrictions on five classes to help students get into the HIM program more quickly, which also demonstrates the department’s commitment to helping students get into the program and to completion as quickly as possible.
* This is a department that utilizes technology in innovative ways to assist students. Perhaps the best example is the online lab hours where faculty are available to students via Adobe Connect, but the department has also embraced technology with the HIM department YouTube page, and the videos that have been created for Orientation, the Virtual HIM tour, various “How to” videos, and other videos designed to assist students.
* The department’s work developing a certificate for incarcerated persons in the Advanced Job Training program deserves special mention, and speaks to the department’s dedication to all of its students.
* The department’s commitment to Service Learning also merits special mention and commendation.

**Recommendations:**

* First and foremost, the department’s innovative use of technology should be shared with other departments whose students - and potential students - might benefit from it. The HIM department YouTube page, the videos that have been created for Orientation, the Virtual HIM tour, various “How to” videos, and the other examples of the innovative use of technology should be shared where possible at Fall Faculty Professional Development Day, through the Center for Teaching and Learning, and through other appropriate venues.
* A real strength of the self-study was showing how the department uses data to determine whether changes led to improvements. The department is strongly encouraged to continue their remarkable use of data this way, particularly in continuing to document whether the number of students completing and the length of the wait list has been impacted by removing the restrictions on those five classes and by the establishment of the local/remote cohorts has increased completion.
* In the meeting with the Review Team, the department noted the challenges they have faced in filling the open tenure-track position due to salary considerations and the requirement for a master’s degree. This is an innovative department – what innovative approaches to this problem could be generated? What strategies could this department spearhead that might show other departments how this problem can be addressed? The department is also encouraged to explore the possibility of using Sinclair’s Grow Our Own program to recruit new faculty members for this position.
* The department noted the difficulty of informing its students and potential students of the advantages of the remote cohort option – the department is encouraged to develop a strategy to inform students and potential students of this option. This strategy should enlist the help of Academic Advising, such that in their initial contacts with students interested in HIM Academic Advisors can make students aware of this option.
* It was mentioned during the meeting with the Review Team that students in the remote cohort are often uncomfortable with approaching potential clinical sites on their own – how can we help students be more confident in their ability to find clinical sites on their own? Could training be provided involving the soft skills required, perhaps involving role playing, that would help students with this task that is so daunting for so many of them? Some students struggle with the social capabilities required to do this on their own, but want to know how to do it. What approaches can the department develop to help them?
* Success rates in the online sections exceed those of students in the face to face sections, despite having the same contact, assignments, and assessments. The department should contact RAR and enlist their help in attempting to determine why this is the case, so that students in face-to-face sections can experience a similar level of success as their online peers.
* The department is encouraged to update any expired articulation agreements and ensure that they are kept current. In addition, it is recommended that the department pursue additional articulation agreements with a greater number of four-year institutions in a thoughtful, strategic manner. If existing articulation agreements have expired and are no longer appropriate, they should be removed from the website.

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

The Review Team would again like to emphasize how impressed they were with the department’s spirit of teamwork and collaboration, the outstanding use of data to determine the effectiveness of strategies for increasing access, retention, and completion, the dedication to helping as many students as possible achieve their goals, the innovative use of technology, and the outstanding outcomes for its graduates as demonstrated by well above average RHIT scores and graduate employment. This is a high-functioning, dynamic department that appears to know exactly what it is preparing its students for – and graduates as a result are well-prepared for RHIT exams, employer exams, and successful careers in Health Information Management.

The department prioritized the goals from the last Program Review and worked diligently to achieve them - the department is truly “hitting its marks”. The department is exceptional at setting goals that are measurable and using data to determine whether they have been achieved, assessing the impact of changes and determining whether additional changes are needed. Well done!

The best advice the Review Team could give the department is to keep doing what it is doing. While suggestions for improvement were provided in the Recommendations section of this document, the most crucial strategy for this department is to maintain its current level of commitment to its students, as well as maintaining its current level of commitment to each other as department colleagues.

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

* Recruiting tenure-track faculty in fields where salaries in the workplace exceed those Sinclair is able to offer is a challenge for many departments. As mentioned previously, this department is good at developing innovative problem solving strategies – could it potentially develop a new approach to recruitment that other departments might also use? How can the Grow Our Own program be leveraged in these situations?
* It is becoming more difficult for many Health Sciences departments to cultivate enough clinical sites to accommodate all of the students who need them – with the move for so many in Health Information Management occupations work to work at home, this challenge is only going to become greater. Health Sciences departments may want to develop an interdepartmental group that could explore new, previously unexplored strategies for solving the issue of the reduced number of clinical sites available for students. How can Sinclair’s Health Sciences departments adapt to the changing circumstances surrounding the availability of clinical sites?