**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2014-15**

**Department:** Human Services and Behavior Health (HSBH)

**Date of Review:** April 2, 2015

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Derek Allen, Professor/Chair, Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Bob Gutendorf, Assistant Director, IT Operations

Eric Henderson, Counselor, Counseling Services

Carole Huddleston, HSBH Program Advisory Committee Member

Terry Larson, Assistant Professor, Dental Health Sciences

Susan Luken, Associate Professor, Biology

Keri Nunn-Ellison, Division Assessment Coordinator, Health Sciences

Derek Reed, Predictive Analytics Researcher, Research Analytics & Reporting

Kelly Smith, Assistant Professor, Communication

Tony Ponder, Dean, Science, Math and Engineering

Patricia Willis, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

Tom McElfresh, Professor/Chair, Human Services and Behavioral Health

Faculty:

Kathy Elson

Sheryl Gould

Gwen Helton

COMMENDATIONS:

* The Review Team was extremely impressed by the department’s passion for its work, dedication to its students, and “go the extra mile” ethic. This passion explains why the faculty so willingly go over and above expectations in serving its students. It is a department that not only cares about its students, but acts on that caring attitude, and lets that caring approach guide all of its work.
* The unity and cohesion among those in the department is remarkable – it is a small department, but one that works as a team. The department had gone through a long period of stability, and then recently experienced a significant change in leadership and faculty membership. Yet with this transition, the department did not miss a beat, there was no interruption of processes or disruption of procedures – it was a turmoil-free transition. While new members brought fresh ideas and different perspectives, the continuity of department procedures and practices- the stability in the midst of change – is truly impressive.
* The assessment work that is done by this department is absolutely top notch – many departments on campus engage in assessment, but few take such a systematic and comprehensive approach on an annual basis. With the rubrics that the department uses with students at the end of their program, their assessment work has become a regular, routinized process. It is something that has become part of what the department does that is “business as usual”. The department has taken assessment of general education and program outcomes to a level far above most other departments at the college.
* The department demonstrates a responsiveness to the needs of the community that is highly commendable. Moreoever, it maintains that responsiveness in the face of competing demands from accreditors that pull the department in other directions. The department does a superb balancing act in this regard, incorporating the Human Services component required by accreditors without losing the traditional medical approach that community partners have come to rely on. The strong connections with dozens of community partners speak to the quality of the department – it has built and maintained a sterling reputation in the community, one that is truly a credit to Sinclair that benefits the institution as a whole.
* This is also a department that is quick to recognize problems and proactively take steps to solve them, even when those steps are difficult or challenging. For example, when the department noted that students in MHT 1101 were experiencing issues with advising and were not being mapped correctly in the program, the department adopted a “case management” model that, while considerably more time and work intensive for the faculty, provides one-on-one attention and personalized advising to students. Besides being a highly commendable approach to advising students, it demonstrates the department’s willingness to do what it needs to do to resolve serious issues. Another example is the behavioral expectations with the *Minimum Behavioral Expectations* that were established to counteract some of the behavioral problems that the departments were experienced with some of its students. The implementation of these expectations involved a considerable amount of work with students who exhibited problem behaviors, but has yielding benefits in terms of improved behavior and a better learning environment for students. Both of these cases are illustrative of a department willing to meet problems head on, undeterred by the work and effort that might be involved in the solutions to those problems.
* Regarding its work with students with behavior problems, the department’s documentation of student issues is excellent. Rarely do student complaints progress to the dean’s office from this department, but when they do the behavior has been so well documented that thee appropriate course of action is clear and unambiguous.
* It was clear that the department had taken the goals and recommendations from the previous Program Review seriously, and had done an excellent job of completing the bulk of them and documenting where the others were no longer appropriate.
* The members of the department are superlative stewards of college resources. The department manages excellent work on a minimal budget. When so little beyond personnel costs is spent by the department, it is a clear indication that the department is being conscientious and frugal in its expenditures.
* One unique aspect of this department deserves special mention – the department offers a chance for many students who would not have the opportunity to pursue another helping profession due to unfortunate decisions that they had made in the past. Often these students present unique behavioral challenges, and the faculty in this department possess the skills and expertise to correct behaviors that would disqualify students from pursuing other programs. When behavior issues arise, faculty expend considerable time and effort to help students correct their behavior where faculty from other departments might immediately remove them from the program. They put extra effort into matching their students with agencies where their past circumstances will not be a liability. This commitment to giving a second chance to students who might not receive one in other programs has earned the Review Team’s respect and praise.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

* In the self-study, the department noted the challenges of offering the MHT 1130 Introduction to Addictive Illness course to incarcerated students – the department is encouraged to thoughtfully review whether this course offering is appropriate for a prison setting given the inability of many of these students to obtain CDCA credentials due to their criminal backgrounds.
* The department presented a compelling argument for the necessity of a new Human Services degree – the Review Team recommends that the department chair meet with the Manager of Curriculum and Articulation and the Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment to discuss the best approach for development of this degree. This consultation may help streamline the process, and will help get degree development on track for the Fall 2016 goal the department has set for offering the program.
* Best practices at Sinclair should be shared as widely as possible for the benefit of other departments. Several examples of these kinds of best practices from the HSBH department were discussed in the meeting with the Review Team. One priority for sharing best practices from the department should be the *Minimum Behavioral Expectations* – it is a document that could improve the approach that many other departments take in dealing with student behavior issues, and the expertise of the faculty in this department uniquely qualifies them to share the *Expectations* with other departments. Can the faculty member who serves on the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) share this document with the BIT team as a means of more widely disseminating it across campus? Could the department chair share it with Department Chairperson’s Council (DCC)? Could it be shared in a session in Fall Faculty Professional Development Day? The student behavior interventions pioneered by this department deserve wide dissemination, and ought to be adapted for use in many other departments on campus.
* On a related note, the department is encouraged to continue to monitor its dismissal and re-instatement policy in regards to the *Minimum Behavioral Expectations,* both to ensure that its implementation continues to be beneficial to students and the program as a whole, and to allow for collection of data that can document and demonstrate its benefits to other departments.
* On the whole, the Review Team would encourage the department to carry on the excellent work it is currently doing advising and educating students, producing skilled and capable graduates, meeting community needs and maintaining connections with agencies, and being a valuable resource for Sinclair as an institution. So much good work is done in this department, and the Review Team strongly recommends these practices be continued.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENT’S PROGRESS AND GOALS:

It is no exaggeration to say that the department produced a self-study and overall Program Review experience of unsurpassed quality. This was one of the very best Program Reviews of recent years, and the department can be justifiably proud of the work it is doing and the service it provides to students and to the Human Services community. The department is a fantastic example of what a cohesive, dedicated, high-functioning, community-connected, assessment-savvy, department looks like, and many other departments would do well to follow the example it sets in so many areas. The department is small in terms of the number of faculty, and frugal in terms of monetary expenditures, yet accomplishes a truly impressive amount with these limited resources.

The department performed excellent work meeting the goals and recommendations from the past Program Review, and has been forwarding thinking in the goals it has specified for the next five years. It is above all committed to serving – serving Sinclair, serving the community, and especially dedicated to serving its students, many of whom are given opportunities in this department that they would not receive in other departments.

Frankly, this is a department that requires very little external direction due to its excellent self-discipline and self-direction. There is little that the Review Team feels the need to recommend beyond continuing with the excellent work that is being done.

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

* Many of the students in this program follow a non-traditional path – there are other departments on campus where students are not typically recent high school graduates. The institution often overlooks some of these programs when considering marketing and recruitment because of the atypical pathways that bring students into these programs.
* Faculty advising is a topic of discussion across Instruction – the “case management” approach used in this department can serve as an excellent model for other departments to follow, and should inform the campus-wide conversation on faculty advising.
* Like this department, others may experience a tension between accreditation expectations/mandates and community needs. This department does a great job of walking that tightrope, other departments may find it more challenging. Assisting departments who experience these kind of tensions will be a challenge for leaders in Instruction.
* The self-study mentioned the need for a new tenure-track faculty member in several places. Many other departments report a similar need. Given the budget constraints that Sinclair will grapple with for the foreseeable future, decisions about new positions will need to be made in ways that address individual department needs while still taking an institutional-level, holistic view that accommodates the needs of the institution as a whole.