**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2015-16**

**Department:** Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

**Date of Review:** March 24, 2016

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Dair Arnold, Assistant Professor, English

Janeil Bernheisel, Manager of Curriculum, Transfer and Articulation

Anne Boyd, Founder of Sinclair’s EMS Program and EMS Advisory Committee member

Amy Brentlinger, EMS Advisory Committee member

Paul Ciarlariello, Manager, Research, Analytics and Reporting

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Jake Fullard, Assistant Professor, Automation & Control Technology

Karen Motley, Professor/Chair, Heath Information Management

Jackie Myers, Division Assessment Coordinator, Business and Public Service

Latonia Peak-Brown, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

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

Michelle Reynolds, Assistant Professor, Nursing

**Department Members Present:**

Sue Merrell Daley, Dean, Business and Public Services

Chuck Sowerbrower, Professor, Emergency Medical Services

Faculty and Staff:

Mike Oaster

Cathy Rohde

Jim Simonson

**Commendations**:

* The commitment and dedication of the chairperson and faculty to the program really stood out to the Review Team – this is a department that cares about its students, about the Emergency Medical Services field, and about Sinclair. While it is a small department, faculty in the department have been heavily engaged in major campus initiatives and leadership opportunities. Department personnel instinctively seek out and support that which will enhance the institution and improve success for its students, and seem to put forth the extra effort that is required without a second thought. The department is fortunate to be led by a Roueche Teaching Excellence Award winning chairperson, with faculty who are experts both in the subject area and in current Sinclair improvement efforts. In short, it is a remarkable department, and a credit to the institution.
* The “student-centered” nature of the department deserves further mention – the Review Team came away with the strong impression that faculty in the department see students as individuals, and recognize that as individuals sometimes a tailored approach will be necessary to help some students succeed. The department displays a remarkable willingness to work with students who are willing to work – it seems that if a student is willing to put forth the effort required, faculty in the department will do all that they can to help that student succeed. One example of this concern for students was the discussion with the Review Team regarding the 2.0 GPA requirement that prevents some of the program’s students from graduating, even if they have completed all of the program requirements. In sharing this concern, the department appear more concerned with the impact on students than the impact on the department’s completion numbers. This is one example among many where the department prioritizes the needs of the students, and puts a great deal of thought and effort into determining how they can be met.
* The Review Team was very impressed with the way that the department has its “finger on the pulse” of all things EMS-related, both externally and internally. The department has a keen awareness of the environment surrounding EMS in the state and region. This awareness is also focused on their students – they know their students, to the point where they know when attrition is due to academic concerns and when it is due to life events. The department knows what it needs to know – about issues related to EMS around the state and region, about issues at Sinclair, and about issues involving its students.
* This is a department that is highly skilled in the collection and use of data. A prime example is the process they used to capture compliance information using iPads, which has resulted in a staggering amount of data regarding the performance of their students. Throughout the self-study there was a great deal of data that was shared regarding enrollment, exam pass rates, etc. The department is not only comfortable with the use of data, they are proficient at it, and allow data to drive decision making in a manner that other departments would do well to emulate.
* The department’s approach to using its Advisory Committee is highly commendable – while many departments devote Advisory Committee meetings to making presentations without much opportunity for input from the committee, the chairperson of this department brings data to share at the meetings, then sincerely seeks the feedback of the Committee in ways that directly influence department decisions.
* Given that this is a relatively small department, the Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accreditation that the department received since the most recent Program Review is all the more impressive. This was a heavy lift for the department, but one where they succeeded spectacularly.
* The chairperson has a reputation for being on top of things with program curriculum – all submissions in CMT are always timely and accurate.
* The department relies heavily on adjunct faculty – many of whom have unpredictable schedules for their full-time jobs. Crafting a teaching schedule that works for the unique works schedules of the adjuncts is a great challenge, and the department has done a great job of scheduling things in ways that adjust to the difficult schedules of the adjuncts it employs. The department coordinates this in a very efficient manner, and keeps materials and activities standardized in ways that help keep the numerous adjuncts they use on the same page as the department.

**Recommendations for Action**:

* The Review Team noted that the bulk of the work in preparing the self-study was done by the chairperson. The rationale for this provided in the self-study was that “the EMS chair is most familiar with the available data from within and outside of the program”. Rather than being a rationale for the chairperson doing the bulk of the work on the self-study, perhaps this should be seen as an opportunity for faculty to become more familiar with the available data, and a key opportunity for cross-training and succession planning. In the next self-study, it is strongly recommended that there be more shared responsibility among department members in its preparation.
* There was a great deal of discussion in the meeting with the Review Team regarding emerging competition for students in the program. The department should prioritize finding ways to get market share back from competitors. How can we market our competitive advantages better? How can potential students be made more aware of comparatively low costs and high completion rates of the program? While the Review Team recognizes the limitations on program marketing inherent in Sinclair’s current campus-wide marketing strategy, what innovative approaches could the department take to get the benefits of the program in front of the public? The department is encouraged to develop a strategy for improving marketing within the constraints currently in place at the institution.
* One problem the department mentioned in the meeting with the Review Team was the time it takes to clean up after adjuncts in the lab. Can expectations for adjuncts be modified such that they clean up themselves, saving the department some time and effort?
* One strength of the department is the large amount of data it collects. Are there opportunities to streamline that data collection? There appears to be some complexity involved in the processes of data collection – can the faculty as a team review these processes and determine where the complexity is necessary, and where processes could perhaps be simplified to gain efficiencies? The goal would be to retain complexity where necessary, but simplify where possible.
* The need for a clinical coordinator was voiced during the meeting with the Review Team. Given the current state of Sinclair’s budget, this may not be feasible. But is there perhaps an opportunity to collaborate with the Fire Science, Criminal Justice, and/or some of the Health Sciences programs to pool resources and create one position that serves as a clinical coordinator for several departments? The Review Team recommends that the department explore this possibility. If that isn’t a possibility, what other collaborative efforts might meet this need?
* While there is a tremendous amount of data collected by the department, in reporting program outcomes assessment results the results were largely survey-based. Are there ways of using the voluminous data that the department collects to support assessment of program outcomes? The department may want to consider consultation with their Divisional Assessment Coordinator and/or the Assistant Provost if needed in this regard.
* Because so many of the department’s students are certificate-seeking, it makes collection of General Education outcome assessment data challenging, in that typically this kind of assessment data would be collected for degree-seeking students. General Education outcomes are valuable to certificate-seeking students just as they are for degree-seeking students. The department should find ways to collect data on Computer Literacy, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Cultural Diversity & Global Citizenship with its certificate students to supplement the data collected for degree-seekers (assessment data for Oral and Written Communications will be collected in COM and ENG courses, respectively, and the department is not responsible for assessing these General Education outcomes).
* Because so many of the department’s students are certificate-seeking, how can more of them be encouraged to complete the associate degree? Or does the department need to review whether the associate degree is really needed?

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

Once again, the Review Team wishes to commend the department on the student-centric nature of all of its work, and for the dedication of the chairperson and faculty to the success of the institution and its students. There does appear to be a strong connection between the department and its students, and it does seem to do a superb job of knowing each student’s individual situation. Faculty in the department are well-known across the campus for their involvement in success initiatives and faculty leadership. There is a remarkable amount of institutional knowledge in a relatively small department thanks to the high level of engagement of the faculty.

It is also an extremely data-rich department, one that is better positioned than most to have its decisions informed by data. The department’s approach to data collection is very, very impressive, although the Review Team would have liked to have seem more results of this wealth of data incorporated into the self-study.

The department has a good grasp on the EMS job market and general state of programs in general in Ohio, and appears to be well-situated to respond to changes in these areas as they occur. However, they will want to focus on re-capturing and maintaining market share in years to come in light of the competing programs in the area.

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

* Marketing. This is an area of concern that comes up repeatedly in Program Review meetings. In this particular case, the department has lost market share to a competitor, which may not have happened had the department been able to markets its specific programs effectively. Sinclair must find a way to market its programs in a way that staunches the flow of students to competitors. It may be that the College needs to make a serious investment in attracting in-house marketing expertise, and empower the person in that position to make decisions and influence the marketing strategy of the college.
* The issue of having a clinical coordinator came up in this Program Review – are there opportunities across the college to share resources such that one clinical coordinator might serve multiple departments? With the new level of collaboration in Health Sciences departments as part of the Health Sciences strategy, these kinds of opportunities for resources sharing should be identified and explored.
* Maintaining an appropriate level of rigor is a difficult balance to strike for many departments – while we would never want to compromise our programs in ways that would lead to an inappropriate lack of rigor, we likewise don’t want to hold to an unnecessarily high level of rigor where it is not appropriate. As an institution, we may need to find ways to soften our approach – where justifiable – in ways that don’t compromise the quality of our programs.
* The department raised the question of the 2.0 GPA graduation requirement and whether it is an unnecessary impediment to student completion and success. In the discussions with the Review Team, it was correctly noted that in many cases, students in the department complete the requirements for a certificate without meeting the 2.0 GPA requirement and are prevented from graduating. In many cases these students go on to get jobs and serve the community. Is the requirement merely an impediment to graduation that serves no real purpose? Perhaps it is time that the College has an extensive conversation about the appropriateness of this requirement, and whether we should consider dropping it.
* The department noted the emergence of a strong competitor in the area that appears to be drawing away potential students – what support can the College give to departments who face competition that potentially may cause the department to lose market share? Are there resources that could be devoted or guidance that could be provided to departments facing new – or even longstanding – competition?