**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2015-16**

**Department:** Radiologic Technology (RAT)

**Date of Review:** March 31, 2016

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Dawayne Kirkman, Director, Student Affairs

Paul Lawrence, Associate Professor/Chair, Electronics Engineering Technology and

Automation & Control Technology

Sue Merrell Daley, Dean, Business and Public Services

Erica Mersfelder, Assistant Professor, Biology

Jackie Myers, Division Assessment Coordinator, Business and Public Service

David Neis, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

Derek Reed, Predictive Analytics Researcher, Research, Analytics and Reporting

Rhonda Seidenschmidt, Director of Medical Imaging, Atrium Medical Center

Janet Schmitt, Director, Strategic Enrollment Management

Mary Wells, Associate Professor, Psychology

Brad West, Associate Professor Business Information Systems

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

Angie Arnold, Professor/Chair, Radiologic Technology

Faculty and Staff:

Pam Callahan

Vicki Luster

Audrey Muslar

Ann Swartz

**Commendations**:

* One thing that stood out to the Review Team was the way that the department is so focused on their students and increasing their chances for success. One example of this is the recent adjustment to the curriculum to help more students succeed, which was part of the departments review of the curriculum at the end of each year to determine whether there are changes that need to be made to help students more easily navigate program requirements. The chairperson and faculty invest the time and effort to ensure that students are able to move through the program as efficiently and quickly as possible. Department decisions appear to be made on a very student centered basis - what is in the best interest of the students appears to be the department's main consideration in decision making.
* A particularly salient example of the department's concern for students is the work that the department has done reducing textbook costs for students, ensuring that all textbooks are used for more than one semester, and sometimes even producing their own materials instead of a textbook to attempt to reduce student textbook costs. In addition, the department attempts to engage the students with campus life, for example, having them participate in Welcome Week activities. Even when students find out that the RAT program isn't for them, the department works with them to help them smoothly transition into another program. On the whole, this appears to be a department that truly prioritizes students.
* The Introduction to Radiologic Technology course that the department established is evidence of the department's strong concern for students, helping them know before getting into the program whether the RAT program would be a good fit for them. This is also indicative of a department that is willing to take bold steps to try to improve student success.
* This is an extremely cohesive department. It was noted that during the meeting with the Review Team that all faculty members were as equally engaged as the chairperson, each sharing their insights and responding to questions as they came up. It was as though any one of the faculty members could have responded with something that all of them would agree with. This department seems to function well, with all of the participants being on the same page to a large extent. Department faculty meet two hours every other week, which is quite a time commitment, but one that appears to pay rich dividends in terms of student success and department unity.
* This dedication and commitment to students appears to pay off in terms of the quality of graduates. The first-time pass rates for students in this program are superb, and local employers note the high quality of the graduates this program produces. Students in the program know that if they are in the program and graduate, they will pass their exams and be employable in the field. This department does an excellent, excellent job of preparing students.
* This department should be commended for their efforts to save costs, getting used equipment from area hospitals where possible. The department should particularly be praised for their attention to average class size, and the steps that they've taken to try and make their course offerings as efficient as possible.
* Academic advisers note that the department is excellent to work with, and provides a great deal of information that is very useful in advising students in the program. The department appears to have an excellent working relationship with Academic Advising.
* The department does a superb job of keeping up with changes in the industry, and is very flexible in adjusting to some of the rapid changes that occur in their field. They do an excellent job of staying on top of emerging technologies, at times preparing students for more advanced technologies than they will actually encounter when they get into the workplace.
* The positive relations with local area hospitals and clinical sites should also be mentioned as a strong point for this department. It has an excellent reputation, and does a superb job of maintaining strong relationships where it needs to so that students can have the clinical experiences that they require to be employable in the field.
* The Review Team would be remiss in not mentioning the excellent assessment work that is done by the department. This appears to be a department that truly understands and utilizes assessment data.

**Recommendations for Action**:

* In the discussion with the Review Team, it was noted that the diversity of students who make it into the program is not reflective of the diversity of students in the Introduction to Radiologic Technology course. How can the diversity of students who actually make it into the program be more representative of those who are interested in the program? Is the math requirement appropriate for this program, and is it an unnecessary barrier to program diversity? The department is strongly encouraged to have conversations with the math department to determine whether the math requirement is the appropriate one for this program, and whether students are unnecessarily being screened out of the program by the math requirement, or by any other program requirements. Sometimes the best radiographers are not the ones that have the highest scores in math, or the best grades in their classes. If the purpose of this particular math requirement is to encourage critical thinking, perhaps other means can be found to teach this valuable skill. The department is strongly encouraged to have conversations surrounding these issues.
* The Review Team wondered who is responsible for students who are interested in the RAT program before they're actually admitted to the program. The department is keenly aware of and responsive to the responsibility it has for students who are admitted to the program. But who has responsibility for the students who are interested in the program but have not yet been admitted? That should probably be part of a wider campus discussion regarding students who are in the Health Sciences degree program but are waiting to get into other programs. Do they have adequate support? What additional support could the department provide? It was clear from the discussions with the department that the department's perception of the waitlist is different from student perceptions of the waitlist. The department is encouraged to discuss how it might help students who are interested in the program but have not yet been admitted, and come up with a brief list of recommendations.
* To what extent could RAR help the program identify students who are at risk for non-success, both those were waiting to get into the program, and those who have already been admitted? Are there predictive analytics that could both help identify students who may not be adequately prepared to enter the program, and those in the program who may need additional resources in order to successfully complete? The department is strongly encouraged to meet with representatives from RAR to discuss what kinds of research might be done in this regard. Can we identify students who are in danger of withdrawing from the program before they do, and thereby improve retention?
* While the department indicated the proprietary competitors are not currently a concern, the department is strongly encouraged to keep an eye out for potential competitors emerging in the area.
* Do the local career centers present an opportunity for recruitment? The department is encouraged to discuss whether students from local career centers could be attracted to the program through focused efforts.
* Having enough clinical sites was mentioned as a challenge for the department. Are there any opportunities to expand clinical sites beyond the immediate region? In Springfield, for example?
* The department has done a great job of developing short-term certificates to address industry needs where appropriate. They are strongly encouraged to continue this. Are there cases were single courses, rather than a certificate, could meet local industry need? What about the needs of radiographers who have continuing education requirements - are there any opportunities there?

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

What a well-functioning department! Other departments would do well to follow this department's example of teamwork and collaboration. Engagement of the faculty in issues surrounding the department is truly exemplary, which enabled each of them to participate equally in the conversations with the Review Team, which is very impressive. This is a top notch department, as evidenced by the excellent pass rates and general high value placed on its graduates by employers. Department faculty also do a superb job of staying current with emerging trends, an example of this being the CT certificate. As stated in the commendations, the Review Team was very impressed by the inordinate amount of time that the department invests in trying to improve student success. Concern for students was exhibited by the department in all conversations with the Review Team. It is a department that is plugged into local needs, for while it only meets once a year with its advisory committee, there is constant informal communication that allows them to keep their finger on the pulse of what is happening in local industry.

In summary, this is a department with a number of impressive traits and characteristics, and with faculty who are dedicated to their students, to the department, and to radiography needs in the region. It is a department that Sinclair can truly be proud of.

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

* The department mentioned the challenges associated with matching rooms to its needs, particularly in terms of computer labs. Is there an opportunity for Sinclair to better match rooms to course requirements?
* While this particular department doesn't currently face proprietary competition, it is something that the institution should be very concerned about. Often proprietary institutions are more interested in recruitment than in producing the required knowledge and skills in their graduates. However, they make a substantial investment in marketing, in ways that are strategic in seeking to exploit some of Sinclair's perceived weaknesses. How can we compete with these proprietary institutions in ways that are more effective, and that better educate potential students regarding some of the disadvantages of these proprietary institutions? Does our workforce development division perhaps present an opportunity for offering similar levels of education to potential students as they would get at a proprietary institution without the general education requirements that may serve as a barrier to potential students? Do we need to better analyze the strengths and weaknesses of our proprietary institution competitors and respond accordingly as an institution?
* The department mentioned challenges associated with their budget, and that they have consistent and predictable budgetary needs that are not reflected in their budget. Is it the case that departments often have needs that are not adequately dressed in their budgets? Or is it the departments need to be more specific in what they're fixed costs are?
* The issue regarding responsibility for Health Sciences degree students who are waiting to get into other programs of interest was raised during the meeting with the review team. Does Sinclair as an institution need to better address who is responsible for these students, and who should be giving them the guidance that they require in order to achieve their educational goals? We know that a substantial number of the students will not be able to enter their program of choice, but can we direct the students to other areas where they can complete a degree or certificate? Do we as an institution know enough about these students who are waiting to get into programs to know whether or not we are adequate addressing their needs and giving them the support they require?
* During the meeting with the Review Team, mention was made of a local institution that has grant money to support students who have life issues that might otherwise prevent him from attending classes. What support does Sinclair already have for students who experience life issues (problems with transportation, job loss, etc.)? Are many staff and faculty on campus even aware of these existing resources? Do we need more resources than we currently have to meet the needs of the students where they are at risk of being prevented from completing because "life happens"?