**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2019-2020**

**Department:** 0630-Surgical Technology

**Date of Review:** September 4, 2020

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Jennifer Kostic, Associate Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Michelle Abreu, Assistant Professor, Respiratory Care

Jenny Bagwell, Advising Manager, Academic Advising

Rocky Belcher, Professor/Department Chair, Management

Derek Petrey, Director, Center for Teaching & Learning & Chair of Humanities, Government and Modern Languages and Coordinator for REACH Across Dayton & Professor

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

Susan Willin-Mulay, Chair, Surgical Technology (SUT)

**Commendations:**

* The Review Team was deeply impressed that this department has accomplished so much given that so much of the work has fallen to one person. The chairperson’s dedication and commitment to the department and its students is remarkable, and the Team wants her to know that they recognize the huge amount of work that she has had to invest to make all of these things happen. Thankfully, the recent addition of an energetic new faculty member should help support the exceptional work the chairperson has been doing.
* The redesign of the SUT.S.AAS degree, which cut down the number of days students were dedicating to program work from five to three days, has had a huge impact on life balance for students in the program. What is really remarkable is that the department was able to do this while increasing its national Surgical Technology certification exam pass rates at the same time. This was a tremendous move by the department, one that appears to have been of great benefit to its students.
* The completion numbers in this department have skyrocketed – in part due to the visionary development of new, in-demand certificates, but also due to thoughtful strategies designed to support completion of students in existing programs, such as reducing the number of required credit hours in the program.
* The department deserves a great deal of praise for its community outreach. The department’s involvement with ‘Shoes for the Shoeless’, The House of Bread, Hope for Riverside, and Sinclair’s own ‘Lunchtime Hunger Program’ is remarkable, and does much to teach its students the importance of service to the community. The department’s “Haunted O.R.” brings an element of fun to this service, with an event that the entire campus looks forward to each year.
* The general education outcome assessment work the department has done is outstanding. The same is true of the program outcome assessment work the department does – this is a department that not only engages in assessment, but one that recognizes the true value of assessment is in using it to drive improvements. This department can serve as a model of how assessment should be done in all departments across the college.
* The strategic approach to reversing the enrollment declines the department had faced a number of years ago deserves special mention. The department recognized a problem and generated some effective and innovative strategies to address it. In developing strategies to increase enrollment, such as reducing the number of days per week students needed to spend on program activities, the department was very meticulous, very thoughtful, and very forward-thinking in developing its strategies. The changes were made in a very mindful manner, and evidence a willingness to be considerate of students’ needs and open to hearing what they have to say. The chairperson really rose to the challenge of reversing the enrollment decline, demonstrating a great deal of character, commitment, and determination.
* In developing certificates, the department chairperson has done a fantastic job of focusing on only the skills students will need in the workplace, getting the certificates back to their roots, so to speak. This streamlined approach helps students to get into the workplace more quickly with the basic skills that they will need to succeed.
* It is not uncommon for employers to ask that the college develop more soft skills in graduates – often that means empathetic, conscientious employees. The department has done a great job of building strategies for developing these soft skills into its programs. Strong service learning components shows that the development of empathy, kindness and consideration are built into the curriculum of the department’s programs.
* The department has done a remarkable job of scaffolding the development of affective, psychomotor, and cognitive skills throughout the program, resulting in the steady growth of the capacity of students to deal with stress of the work environment in the operating room.
* With everything else the department has accomplished with minimal personnel, it is truly remarkable the department has also managed to maintain program accreditation. This is a heavy lift, but crucial to the survival of the department.
* The excellence of the department’s degree program is indicated by the pass rates above 90% on the national certification exam, particularly when compared to pass rates in the 60-75% range nationwide.
* The department has done a remarkable job of designing the Surgical Instrument Technician short-term certificate in a way that allows students waiting to get into the associate degree to complete this certificate and even get employment in the field prior to their admission into the program.
* The department does an outstanding job of meeting both student and employer expectations, as indicated by extremely high rates of satisfaction from these groups. This is a department that is skilled at building and maintaining relationships with both students and local employers.
* After years of having a negative contribution margin from 2007 to 2018, in 2019 the department managed to change to a positive contribution margin, which is an important indication of the department’s efforts to control costs.
* This department excels at recognizing stakeholder needs, and is very forward thinking in its ability to build programs that meet the emerging needs of stakeholders and community. Its development of new certificates to meet local need is highly commendable.
* The Review Team was also very impressed with the commitment to improving the environment of the operating rooms its graduates will be working in – and in making those improvements one student at a time. The department trains its students to be preceptors someday – preparing the individuals who will train future students. It does so while maintaining a balance of rigor and empathy, intent on ensuring students are ready for the challenging setting of the operating room.
* Few health fields require the one-to-one preceptors accreditation requires of this program, but it is a challenge the department has done a marvelous job of overcoming.

**Recommendations for Action:**

* Perhaps the most important recommendation the Review Team could make would be for the department to keep doing what it is doing. Continue to maintain strong connections to the community that will allow the department to create programs that anticipate workforce needs. Continue to create scaffolding that maintains progressive skill development and mastery while inculcating empathy and professionalism. Continue to make the kinds of student centered changes that have led to increased completion without sacrificing performance on national certification exams. The department has been doing some impressive things for the past several years that have led to demonstrable improvements – keep doing them!
* The department expressed concerns about the math preparation of students entering the program. The Review Teams recommends outreach to the Math department to help determine where the shortfall is for students. Problems appear to include understanding the metric system, conversion factors, etc., – is there a math course that might meet their needs better than the one that is currently required? Does the math department have suggestions regarding how this shortfall could be addressed? Are there free online modules or other resources that the department could use that might help better prepare students in this area? Similarly, are there free online resources that might be used to improve students’ writing abilities?
* Sinclair’s Marketing Department has developed new templates that allow departments to create their own promotional materials for recruitment (see <https://employees.sinclair.edu/index.cfm/offices/non-academic-departments/marketing-services/downloadable-templates/>). The department is encouraged to explore these resources to meet their marketing and recruiting needs.
* The Review Team wishes to express its recognition of and appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the department chairperson - however, with a reliable full-time faculty member now supporting the department, the chairperson is encouraged to delegate much of what she has been doing. This will serve to not only lighten the load for the chairperson, but will provide crucial professional development opportunities for the new faculty member.

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

The Review Team was so impressed by this department and its chairperson, and by what has been accomplished with a minimum of personnel. This is a department that has demonstrated remarkable problem solving skills. The department has strong connections to the community and is well-aligned with its needs. It is a department that is experiencing tremendous growth, but one that with that growth takes steps to ensure that accessibility is preserved. The direction of this department is aligned with the direction of the college as a whole.

This is also a department with a strong orientation toward continuous improvement, one that looks at challenges and says “how can we make this better?” In doing so, it does an exceptional job of collecting and analyzing data, and applying the results to make improvements. This is a department that embodies the concept of continuous improvement.

The department doesn’t just apply that improvement to its programs and students – it actively seeks to improve the entire field of Surgical Technology, one student at a time. It has been very purposeful and strategic in trying to improve the climate of operating rooms across the Miami Valley, seeking to improve the environment their graduates will be working in.

This is an exceptional department, one that Sinclair can be proud of.

**Institutional or Resource Barriers to the Department’s Ability to**

**Accomplish Its Goals, if any:**

* Does Sinclair need to invest in positions in Instruction devoted to expanding apprenticeships? This department has the opportunity to expand apprenticeship opportunities for its students, but may not have the bandwidth to pursue them. Is this something that should be addressed across the whole of Instruction?
* Are we saturating clinical/preceptor sites? What do we need to do to maintain these relationships? This is a potential concern for many Health Sciences departments. While each individual department does a superb job monitoring in this area, do we need to take a more institutional-level view? Is there a need to monitor our clinical/preceptor relationships more closely across the college, or is our current decentralized approach doing a sufficient job of monitoring and maintaining these crucial relationships?
* As is the case in many departments across Sinclair, this department is very conscious about the need for additional positions. Unfortunately, in the current budget climate, Sinclair is not able to fill the personnel requests of all departments, and it is to the credit of many of our departments that they are still able to thrive in a time of resource constraints. As an institution, we will need to be thoughtful regarding new hires as budget conditions and the dynamics of the situation continue to evolve.