**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2016-17**

**Department:** Dental Hygiene (DEH)

**Date of Review:** March 17, 2017

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Michelle Abreu, Division Assessment Coordinator, Health Sciences

Chad Atkinson, Manager, Research, Analytics & Reporting

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Ribhi Daoud, Professor, Economics

Sarah Finch, Assistant Professor, Biology

Larraine Kapka, Assistant Dean, Science, Math and Engineering

Dawayne Kirkman, Director, Student Affairs

David Krasofsky, Assistant Director, IT Systems

Cathy Lawler, DDS and DEH Advisory Board Member

Clay Pittman, Chair/Professor, Aviation

Tanya Scheper, Advising Manager, Academic Advising

Kent Zimmerman, Professor, Communication

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

Sue Raffee, Chair/Professor, Dental Hygiene

Faculty and Staff:

Pam Edwards

Sheranita Hemphill

Bonita Kipling

Wendy Moore

**Commendations**:

* First and foremost the Review Team would like to express how deeply impressed they were by this department and its superb, dedicated faculty. The Dental Hygiene program at Sinclair has had an excellent reputation for decades – and it is the dedication and commitment of the department’s faculty to its students and to the Dayton community that maintains that sterling reputation. This department is known in the local dental community for the excellence of the graduates it prepares and the exceptional services its clinic provides to the community. We are proud to have this program at Sinclair!
* There is a tremendous amount of experience and expertise in this department. The Review Team noted the spirit of comradery and cooperation, which no doubt helps this department perform in such a high-functioning manner. The smooth functioning of this department is particularly impressive in light of the number of adjunct faculty they oversee.
* In addition to the community feedback that testifies to the high quality of this department, the Review Team felt that commendations were also in order for the superb results the department earned in its latest re-accreditation process wherein the status of “approval without reporting requirements” was awarded. Well done!
* Because of the excellence of its reputation, this department is where local dentists and dental hygiene organizations turn to when there is a need for dental health related education at the associate degree level. By way of example, when local dentists developed concerns about proprietary schools that had sprung up and were providing expensive education that did not seem to be adequately preparing dental assistants, the community turned to this department to ask for the establishment of the dental assisting certificate. Not only does this example illustrate the confidence in and respect for the department that local employers hold, but also illustrates the department’s responsiveness to the needs of the community. By all indications, the new dental assistant program is flourishing, with burgeoning demand by students who want to get into the program. While an initial investment of time and effort was required, the department is clearly willing to make that investment in meeting community needs.
* Another example of the department’s responsiveness to community needs is the scheduling of EFDA classes Friday during the day. Noting feedback from the community indicating a need for course offerings at this time, the department has already had a tremendous response to the first EFDA offerings on Friday. This willingness to listen to community feedback and respond accordingly is commendable.

* There are so many measures where this department produces impressive outcomes. Course success rates are exemplary. Board pass rates are at 100%. Working with RAR, the department was able to determine that 20 of 23 total 2015 graduates were employed in the state of Ohio in jobs that would be covered by Ohio Department of Job and Family Services data - and that is a conservative estimate, in that it wouldn’t include graduates employed out of state in or in certain other jobs in Ohio. There is abundant evidence that this department provides its students with what they need to be successful when they complete the program. The department shared a noteworthy example of this when they brought to the Review Team meeting a student’s award-winning poster board presentation that won first place out of 66 submissions by 12 different schools in the state. This is representative of the caliber of graduates this department is producing.
* The department does a phenomenal job of maintaining contact with those graduates. The Dental Hygiene department pioneered the use of Facebook and other social media with its students, and thanks to that foundational work is peerless in its ability to connect with alumni of its programs. Over time, the department’s Facebook page has expanded to include not only students and graduates, but employers and their staff as well. It has become a resource for jobs for graduates, and allows them to pick up additional work as other dental hygienists need substitutes. Few departments on campus have the ability to know where their graduates are and what they are doing – and receive feedback from them - to the extent this one does.
* Of particular note is the Dental Hygiene Department’s service to the community through its clinic. For a very small fee, dental care is provided to the community at large, enabling many who would not otherwise be able to afford care excellent dental health treatment. There are probably few things that Sinclair does that have as much immediate, tangible impact on the surrounding community, and the department has earned high commendations for their service in this regard, often treating underserved populations. The Review Team was proud to be able to say that Sinclair offers this service to the Dayton community.
* Perhaps the best indication of the department’s commitment to its students is the faculty advising approach this department has adopted. Not only is each faculty member tasked with advising a number of students, but the department has taken it to the next level by standardizing the approach to advising, developing an advising checklist that ensures each student receives comparable benefits from their interactions with faculty. Students are made to feel comfortable with faculty and included in the program right at the beginning of their time in the program. This work that has been done with students is truly impressive, and this connection with faculty likely helps retain students who would otherwise be lost to attrition.

* This department continually seeks to improve student outcomes. The recent increase in admissions requirements is an excellent example of this, but also demonstrates that the department seeks to do so in a thoughtful manner, mindful of possible unintended consequences. When asked about the possibility of competitive admissions, the department noted that not all programs that have gone to competitive admissions have experienced reduction in attrition or increases in student success. They pointed out that not everything that makes for a successful dental hygienist can be captured in a test score or in GPA. A careful consideration of what is best for the student appears to guide the department in this as in all of their efforts.
* The department has a reputation for having an excellent relationship with Academic Advising, going out of their way to proactively share information that will help Advisors guide students to make the best choices regarding the dental health programs at Sinclair.
* The department appears to do an outstanding job of keeping up with advances in technology in the field. For example, as dental hygiene radiology has shifted from using film to digital imaging, the department has changed the emphasis of its training accordingly.
* Finally, the Review Team was very impressed with the department’s level of preparation for the possibility of offering baccalaureate degrees. It would appear that at a moment’s notice the department would be able to put forward baccalaureate degree pathways. They are prepared for this eventuality, and even if state law is never changed to allow it, the effort and foresight that they have put into these efforts is very impressive.

**Recommendations for Action**:

* The department’s work on faculty-student advising is simply too good to keep to themselves. The Review Team strongly recommends that the department find ways to educate other departments on campus know about their approach to faculty student advising, perhaps through workshops. Other departments need to follow Dental Hygiene’s example in this respect.
* Retention in the program continues to be a challenge for this department, although steps have been made to address this (for which the impact has yet to be determined). During the discussion with the Review Team, the faculty noted that in reviewing the coursework of students who have taken required prerequisite science courses prior to entering the program, those who take multiple science courses in a term tended to have increased success relative to those who only take one science course at a time. Could this factor be incorporated into the Quad A criteria? Could it potentially be used as a score on the department’s admissions rubric?
* In the next Program Review, the Review Team recommends that the department do an analysis of the different factors involved in admission to the degree program (increased TEAS score and GPA admissions requirements, changes to Quad A considerations, etc.) and over the next five years track differences in retention and program completion related to these factors.
* The Review Team would suggest that students be placed into the Health Sciences Career Community prior to their enrollment in DEH 1105. Efforts could be made there to help them understand the rigor and expectations of the program, particularly in regards to online orientation.
* This department is one of only a handful that was granted an exception to the COM graduation requirement. One of the stipulations of that exception is that the department demonstrate that it is helping its students achieve the Oral Communication General Education outcome, and furthermore provide evidence that their students are achieving it. In Annual Update submissions and the next Program Review the department provide evidence that it is educating its students on Oral Communication and provide data and analysis regarding how well its students are meeting this outcome.
* There appears to be a great deal of demand for the new Dental Assisting program. Could more students potentially be accommodated without flooding the marketplace? If so, the department should develop strategies to increase capacity for students in this program without reducing capacity for its other programs. The Review Team recognizes that there would be challenges with this, but recommends that the department explore possibilities for making this happen.
* The department noted that there are higher grades on midterms and final exams in DEH 1102 in online sections compared to face-to-face sections. It was suggested that this was due to cheating by online students, but is this necessarily the case? Are there approaches that could be used to reduce cheating on exams? Is it possible that there are other factors involved, perhaps something that helps online students succeed at higher rates that should be adopted by face-to-face sections? The department is encouraged to explore this phenomena in depth, and either implement strategies to reduce cheating, or, if appropriate, adapt strategies that are working in online sections to the face-to-face sections.

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

When considering factors that make great departments great, this department checks off all the boxes. It has experienced faculty who go the extra mile with their students, as illustrated by the faculty advising that faculty in this department do. While time consuming, it makes all the difference with some of their students. The outcomes in terms of course success rates, Board exam pass rates, and job placement of graduates for this department are fantastic. The department is admired and respected by employers in the area, and maintains close connections with them via its advisory board, participation in local dental health organizations, and social media. The service that this department does for the community in its clinic, particularly for underserved populations, is exemplary, and is one of the finest example of Sinclair giving back to the community that supports it. The departments is efficient, cost-conscious, and does a remarkable job of making do with limited resources. While it sets high expectations for its students, the outcomes for graduates of the program demonstrates that it helps its students meet those expectations.

The Review Team wishes to communicate its admiration and respect for the Dental Hygiene department, its leadership, and its faculty. Its reputation for quality and its commitment to students is first-rate, and Sinclair is fortunate to have such a high-quality, well-renowned Dental Hygiene program.

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

* Like many departments on campus, this department struggles with resource limitations, which are a particular concern as new technology is introduced in the field that the department needs to be able to prepare its students to use. Fortunately the department does well with finding a way to make things work, but Sinclair may need to be mindful of departments such as this one in allocating resources, and provide guidance on how to spread limited resources as far as possible. This department appears to provide a great example in this respect.
* The Review Team was intrigued by the department’s response to the advisability of selective admissions – while many departments with waitlists have undergone Program Review, none has ever explored the limitations of selective admissions in a Program Review meeting before, or discussed that academic factors aren’t always the best indicators of skill in Health Sciences programs. How can we find ways to assess “bedside manner” and other soft skills that contribute to success in Health Sciences programs, and help make them a factor in admissions to these programs?
* There is a misconception in the community that some Health Sciences programs have waitlists because Sinclair doesn’t put enough resources into its programs. What steps can the College make to correct this misconception and help the general public understand the constraints of clinical site availability and job availability that are to a large extent the factors that limit the number of students accepted into cohort programs?