**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2018-19**

**Department:** Dietetics (DIT)

**Date of Review:** April 11, 2019

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Jennifer Kostic, Associate Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Jenny Bagwell, Academic Advising, Academic Advisor

Levi O’Neill, Program Alumni & Clinical Preceptor at Heartland

Dair Arnold, Assistant Professor, English

Michelle Abreu, Assistant Professor, Respiratory Care

Phyllis Adams, Chair/Professor, Early Childhood Education Center

Matt Massie, Manager, Student and Community Engagement and Adjunct Faculty, Marketing

**Department Members Present:**

Dean, Health Sciences

Rena Shuchat

Faculty and Staff

David Clark, Chairperson/Program Director

Nora Schaefer, Faculty

**Commendations:**

* There is no better example of teamwork, cohesion, and unity of purpose in a department at Sinclair than this one, and the collaborative and complementary relationship between them enables the two full-time faculty members in the department to accomplish far more than would be generally expected from two people. With a deep, shared commitment to doing all they can to serve their students, this small department accomplishes amazing things, with a list of initiatives and department activities that rivals that of far larger departments.
* This is a program that really goes the extra mile with its students. Although there are only two full-time faculty, their responsiveness to student needs is exceptional. Frequently additional sections are scheduled and independent study sections are set up to meet student needs, and this additional effort is made by faculty on behalf of students without complaint. It is a department that truly serves its students, and does whatever it takes to meet their needs.
* The department’s commitment to student learning is highly commendable, and the use of formative assessment in enhancing the learning process appears to be extremely beneficial for students. Many of the learning strategies they employ involve considerably more time and effort from department faculty than that entailed by traditional approaches, but such is the commitment to students that the Review Team isn’t sure the faculty recognize how far above and beyond they are going – to them, doing everything you can for your students just comes naturally. Faculty in the department take the approach that experiences should allow students to learn, and that formative evaluation can play a crucial role in the learning process. For example, in higher level courses after students take an exam they must review the items they missed, discuss why the correct item is the best answer, and discuss why the other options aren’t. They are then given the opportunity to re-take the exam, which is an excellent approach to learning that could be adopted by other departments. The department’s approach to remediation is highly commendable, and allows students to learn from their mistakes.
* As part of this commitment to student learning, the department has embraced Service Learning, embedding it throughout the curriculum. The Chili Luncheon event, the work with community agencies, and other Service Learning activities across the curriculum allow students to gain valuable experience while meeting a community need. It is highly commendable that the department has embraced this methodology so completely and utilized it so effectively.
* One of the things that impressed the Review Team the most about this department is their work fighting food insecurity and meeting the hunger needs of both students and the community. The annual Chili Luncheon raises money for the Food Bank. Students from the department serve a meal at House of Bread, managing all aspects of it from start to finish. The Dietetics & Nutrition Club has implemented a Lunchtime Hunger Program to serve the food needs of students on campus. In collaboration with Student Affairs, the department is working to open an on-campus food pantry. The department’s work fighting hunger is magnificent and compassionate, and is one of the best examples of a department at Sinclair working to meet a pressing need in the community in ways that not only render service, but allow students to gain experience in their field of study. The department should be extremely proud of its efforts in this regard, and it reflects well on the college as a whole. By involving its students in these efforts, it encourages them to continue to address food insecurity issues in the community as they graduate and move into the workforce, creating an impact that continues for years to come.
* The Review Team would like to commend the department for its innovative approach to addressing feedback they received from their accreditors regarding opportunities for improvement in training with preceptors. The department developed a Cultural Luncheon that not only increased participation by preceptors, but allowed students an opportunity to host and present, while providing CEUs for preceptors at the same time. The Review Team was impressed at the way that the department generated a solution that became a win for students getting valuable experience hosting the event, a win for preceptors who would now have an opportunity for CEUs, and a win for the department in terms of a fourfold increase in preceptor attendance and in terms of meeting accreditation requirements. This is an excellent example of the kind of creative problem solving that the department is capable of, and one that led to improved benefits for all stakeholders involved.
* Another example of this capacity for creative problem solving was the challenges the department faced with the closing of Good Samaritan Hospital. The loss of this crucial clinical site represented a significant potential barrier to the ability of students to complete their programs. In response, faculty in the department developed simulation case studies and electronic medical exercises that were so effective that in some ways they exceeded the training students would have received in the clinical environment.
* The Review Team was also impressed by the collaborative relationship the department has developed between first year and second year students. Strong second year students tutor students who have applied for tutoring services, and that kind of peer support can make a substantial difference in a student’s chances of success in a program.
* The department has developed exceptional Interprofessional Education (IPE) opportunities for its students with other departments on campus. Students in the department work with Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Behavioral Health and Human Services, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Exercise Science, and other departments in collaborative activities that mirror what they will experience in the workplace. This kind of learning is essential for our graduates in the work situations they will find themselves in after graduation, and the department has done an outstanding job of arranging these experiences for them.
* The Student Tracking Grid was particularly impressive to the Review Team, and while it is understood that a substantial amount of time and effort is required to obtain and maintain this information on graduates, it is an approach that should be adopted by other departments as a means of tracking outcomes for graduates and maintaining program alumni relationships in the years following their transition from Sinclair.
* The success rates in courses in this department are phenomenal, due in large part to the dedication of faculty in the department in doing whatever it takes to help their students learn.
* On top of the excellent success rates in courses in the department, the placement rates for graduates of programs in this department are exceptional. Placement rates for both dietetic technician and dietary manager graduates are 100%, which is almost unheard of.
* The Dietetics and Nutrition department is well known for having strong ties with Academic Advising, and does an excellent job of keeping advisors updated with curriculum changes and other information. Faculty from the department frequently visit Advising meetings to share information and maintain relationships. The department recently completed an extensive workshop with Enrollment Services and Academic Advising, which not only provides important information about the program to those groups, but also serves a marketing function to help those groups inform students of the opportunities in this field.
* The department has excellent connections with local employers, and really has a finger on the pulse of the local job market. Both faculty members continue to work part-time, which plays a valuable role in keeping them connected to changes in workforce needs and expectations.

**Recommendations:**

* There are so many things the department is doing well, and so many examples of challenges that were addressed in creative and innovative ways. The first recommendation that the Review Team makes is that the department select one or two of these innovative approaches that the department feels would be most beneficial to share with other departments, and develop a presentation for Fall Faculty Professional Development Day and other venues where best practices are shared.
* While the department is named the Dietetics and Nutrition Department, the associate degree program it offers is called the Dietetic Technician program. There is some concern that the program name doesn’t properly communicate to students what the degree is about, and fewer students may be aware of the opportunities the degree provides as a result. The department is strongly encouraged to explore changing the name of the program, and if it decides this is appropriate, work with the Manager of Curriculum, Articulation, and Transfer to change the name of the program in the Curriculum Management Tool (CMT).
* There was a considerable amount of discussion in the meeting with the Review Team regarding the department’s relationship with the University of Dayton (UD), and issues with the baccalaureate degree program there. Sinclair’s Nursing Department has recently developed a 1+2+1 program with their colleagues at UD, and the Review Team strongly encourages the department to investigate whether a similar arrangement with UD might be appropriate for Dietetics. Whether or not this type of arrangement is appropriate for the Dietetics program, UD remains an important transfer partner, and the department should also explore whether UD would be willing to make completion of the Sinclair degree an advantage for students who are applying to UD as a means of encouraging more of our students to complete the degree.
* The department has been diligent in the development of relationships with transfer partners. Are there other transfer opportunities for our students? Can completion of the DTR exam be part of any future articulation agreements? The department is encouraged to investigate whether additional articulation agreements might be developed with other institutions in the state, and perhaps even in neighboring states.
* The Review Team recommends that the department continue its efforts to market its programs to high school students. There was some discussion about the effectiveness of department participation in high school career fairs, but regardless of whether a new approach is utilized, the department should maintain its efforts to attract high school students to the high demand programs it offers.
* Replacement of aging equipment was discussed with the Review Team, and the department noted that it was able to utilize the Capital Request process to make necessary equipment replacements. The department is encouraged to develop a formal timeline for replacement of equipment in the future, and utilize this timeline to determine which Capital Requests will be made in future years.
* Succession management is an important issue for many departments, and a formal succession management plan should be developed based on anticipated developments over the next several years.
* The challenges associated with recruitment of adjuncts were discussed with the Review Team. The department is encouraged to work with HR to increase advertising for new applicants and to manage the list of applicants.
* Getting students to complete the DTR credentialing exam immediately after graduation remains a challenge. Given the rich data the department already has on graduates, is it possible to compare outcomes for students who complete the exam immediately after graduation with those do not as a means of demonstrating to students the advantages of not procrastinating taking the exam?

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

This is truly an awe-inspiring department, and the Review Team is deeply impressed by what is accomplished with so few faculty. The level of teamwork, the connection to local employers, the passion for student learning evidenced by these faculty is unsurpassed and Sinclair, and their students are so fortunate to be taught by faculty who are so dedicated to helping them succeed and so concerned for their level of preparation for the future. This is an outstanding example of what a dynamic, united, creative, committed department can accomplish, and the Review Team wishes to express its admiration for the peerless work this department is doing.

The department did an outstanding job of addressing the goals it had set for itself in the most recent Program Review. It has developed a reasonable set of goals for the next five years that appear to be appropriate to its mission and the direction it is currently moving in, and there is every reason to think that they will be accomplished by the next Program Review meeting in five years.

The Review Team wishes to emphasize once again its admiration for the student focus of the department, for its creative and innovative approaches to addressing challenges, for its service in meeting the hunger needs of the community, and for the high quality of its programs that have allowed it to develop such a strong reputation in the community. The meeting with the department was an inspiring and rewarding experience, and the Review Team looks forward with anticipation with what the department will accomplish in the years to come.

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

* Marketing remains a challenge for many departments at Sinclair. For this department, marketing initiatives have already been undertaken, but determining how best to connect with potential students has been difficult. Are there best practices that have been pioneered by any other departments at Sinclair that could be shared to increase connection to potential students and increase the effectiveness of recruitment efforts?
* Many departments struggle with the challenge of replacing aging equipment. This department, like many others, may benefit from developing a formal equipment lifecycle replacement plan that would allow them to forecast future needs and schedule Capital Requests years in advance. In many cases, it seems that some departments have adopted a policy of using equipment until it gives out, which is admirable for its concern for cost reduction, but often leads to unanticipated replacement needs that have not been budgeted.
* Concerns with recruiting adjuncts are not unique to the department. Are there steps Sinclair could take as an institution to support and assist departments in this area? Given that many departments struggle with finding adjuncts during the day, do hybrid courses offer a solution that would reduce the need for daytime instructors?