**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2019-2020**

**Department:** 0619- Mental Health and Addiction Services

**Date of Review:** September 10, 2020

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Kathleen Cleary, Interim Provost

Jennifer Kostic, Associate Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Michelle Abreu, Assistant Professor, Respiratory Care

Eric Henderson, Counselor/Coordinator, Counseling Services

Sharyn Hunter, Professor, English

Kyle Jones, Interim Chair/Professor, Communication

Patricia Willis, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Sciences

Gwen Helton, Chair, Mental Health and Addiction Services

Faculty:

Sheryl Gould

Kathy Elson

**Commendations:**

* The Mental Health and Addiction Services faculty are incredibly committed to their students. This program has an outstanding reputation in the community, but one of the key parts of that is the concern they have for their students – faculty in the program go far beyond what is expected, that is why the program is so successful. It is a department that develops appropriate and strong relationships with their students. Part of what makes this such a high quality program is the extent to which faculty know their students, know their strengths and weaknesses, and are able to provide the guidance and mentorship required to help their students be successful in the field. One of many examples of this is the attention the department focuses on adult students – faculty recognized how complex and busy their lives are, took it upon themselves to develop schedules to better accommodate them.
* It is also a department that benefits from strong leadership, by a chairperson who over the past few years has expressed a willingness to explore different approaches, to change as circumstances require, to establish a collaborative approach that has enabled the department to establish new, productive, and mutually beneficial connections with other departments. The chairperson has demonstrated a strong ability to think outside the box and approach longstanding problems in new ways. This department is now being led differently than it has in years past – and the willingness of department leadership to approach things differently has allowed the department to grow in new and exciting ways.
* Among the collaborations mentioned above is the department’s leadership in Interprofessional Education (IPE) – this has been of great benefit to students in other departments. The department has really done outstanding work that has demonstrated to students in other areas the importance of recognizing and responding appropriately to mental health issues. This spirit of collaboration has also led to great strides in helping Mental Health and Addiction Services, Social Work, and Psychology work together to ensure that students are guided to the program that is the best fit for their occupational goals.
* Open Educational Resources (OER)s are time consuming and resource intensive for a department to develop. Yet few efforts by a department have such a direct effect on the financial health of our students. The Review Team wishes to strongly commend the department’s work in this regard, which is estimated to have saved its students $35,000 each year across four courses. Well done!
* The department has produced astounding increases in the number of credentials awarded in recent years, particularly in terms of short-term certificates. The way the department has embedded certificates into its curriculum is exemplary.
* Many of these gains in credential completions have come through the department’s collaborations with Sinclair’s Advanced Job Training efforts. The department’s dedication to serving these students – students who are in such need of support - is highly commendable.
* This is a department willing to make bold moves if it will better serve their students. The Review team was deeply impressed by the decision to forgo voluntary accreditation to allow it to make a department name change that would be of great benefit to students. The new name better speaks to students about what they can get from the program, and is far more recognizable to the community at large. The department displayed clear, decisive thinking that prioritized student needs.
* The department’s pioneering work with Behavioral Competencies has expanded from a department-wide to a division-wide effort – many Health Sciences departments now use the Behavioral Competencies because it is such an exceptional tool. This department has assisted other departments by providing a strategy for working with difficult students, helping set expectations for their behavior, and offering approaches to managing problems that arise.
* The department deserves a great deal of credit for its work expanding its network of clinical sites. The chairperson has led the way in terms of strengthening its advisory network, identifying new opportunities to expand to different locations for practicum experiences, and other connections with stakeholders outside of Sinclair.
* The Review Team would be remiss if it didn’t compliment the department on its excellent assessment work, both in terms of general education and program outcome assessment.
* The department created a re-admissions committee to work with students who have been dismissed from program, utilizing faculty from other departments to assess whether dismissed students are prepared to be appropriately readmitted to the program.
* The department works with Sinclair’s Legal Studies department with students’ legal records, expunging, etc., providing the legal guidance necessary to allow many of them to work in the healthcare field. This is reflective of the department’s commitment to giving students a second chance regardless of their life experiences. This is a department that sees the potential in some students that others may miss, and it changes lives as a result.
* The collaboration with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board deserves special mention – what a remarkable partnership, and one that has helped a lot of students in cohorts earn credentials.
* Finally, the Review Team was impressed with how very well written, well organized, concise and focused this self-study was. It provided a clear, thorough description of the exceptional work being done by a remarkable department.

**Recommendations:**

* During the meeting with the Review Team, there was a great deal of discussion regarding policy barriers to some students who have factors in their life history that would bar them from employment in the medical field. The department has been persistent – and creative – in helping some students surmount these barriers. However, too many students are needlessly – and tragically – prevented from working in a field where they would succeed because of these policy barriers. The department is strongly encouraged to work with the Dean’s Office, the Provost’s Office, and the President’s Office to remove policy barriers related to Medicaid billing, discriminatory hiring practices, etc.
* There has been an increasing demand from departments for marketing resources. In response, the Marketing Department has created a number of resources that empower departments to develop their own materials, rather than waiting for Marketing help. New flyer templates, CoVideo software, and other new resources provided by Marketing present departments with exciting opportunities to enhance their advertising and recruiting activities with a minimum of help from Marketing personnel. The department is encouraged to explore these resources to develop new efforts to promote the program and attract students.
* There was a great deal of discussion regarding the importance of Motivational Interviewing in the mental health field, and how a course in this area is greatly needed in the associate degree program. However, given credit hour limitations, it is difficult to add new programs to the curriculum. The department is encouraged to explore submission of a wavier for Sinclair’s COM requirement, with the rationale that a Motivational Interviewing course could be used to meet Sinclair’s Oral Communication general education outcome.
* The need in the department’s programs for electronic health record training tools was discussed at length. The department should research this issue and identify the best approach for meeting this need. Several options were discussed, including, TherapyNotes, or having Instructional Technology build something in-house. Other funding options could be explored to purchase tools if need be, but the department should have a solution in place well before the next five year review.
* The department is encouraged to pursue grant opportunities for COVID related grants or in-demand job grant opportunities.
* There was some discussion regarding the open enrollment MHT 1101 Introduction to Human Services and MHT 1130 Fundamentals of Addiction Counseling courses, and how students who are not serious about pursuing the field may be lowering success rates. The department is encouraged to dig deeper into its data to determine the extent to which students who apparently have no interest in the field might be impacting success rates. Subsequently, the department should have a thoughtful discussion regarding the implications of the data, and whether changing the open enrollment nature of these courses might increase success, but at the cost of not exposing students to the field who might decide to major in it.

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

The Review Team wishes to express how deeply impressed it was with this department. This is a department that changes the lives of many of its students, some of whom might not be given a chance in other fields. This dedication to making a difference for some of our students who need it most is highly praiseworthy. This program is student focused, focused on the needs of the community, and also focused on helping other departments at Sinclair improve. It grown into a department that is bold, innovative, and forward-thinking in addressing problems.

The chair has brought the program into alignment with the current climate for meeting the mental health needs of the community. Historically, it is also a department that has earned a high level of respect for the high quality and advanced skills of its graduates.

Throughout the document the student centeredness of the faculty and the commitment to developing personal connections with students was clearly evident. This was illustrated by the difficult, but ultimately beneficial, decision to change the name of the department at the cost of voluntary program accreditation because it was in the best interests of the students to do so. This change will improve the department’s ability to attract students, and better communicates to community the services the department provides.

This department has a razor-sharp focus on continuous improvement, in constantly asking what changes can be made, in constantly researching what new resources are available, and constantly asking itself how it can better serve its students. It is a department that is not afraid to make the big changes and take the big steps, and then make adjustments as circumstances require. It is a department that has earned the gratitude and respect of its students, the regional mental health community, and other departments across the institution.

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

* The department identified electronic records training is a barrier to the success of its students – as noted in the recommendations, the department will want to address this in the near future.
* Limited marketing resources are a perennial barrier to success at Sinclair, although the Marketing Department has recently taken steps toward a self-service model that should increase access to the marketing resources departments need to attract students and raise awareness.
* The issues the Review Team discussed with the department surrounding the MHT 1101 Introduction to Human Services course are common to many different departments with introductory courses across campus. There are challenges for many departments in defining the target audience for these courses, and determining which students are really interested in the field versus those just taking an elective. Could creation of materials prior to students taking introductory classes – “At a Glance” materials, presentations, etc. – help students better gauge their interest prior to enrolling in an introductory course? Could orientations prior to a course beginning help serve this function? What steps can departments at Sinclair make to better prepare students prior to entering these courses, and perhaps better educate them prior to the beginning of the course whether the field is a good fit for their future?