**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2016-17**

**Department:** Nursing (NSG)

**Date of Review:** April 6, 2017

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Michelle Abreu, Division Assessment Coordinator, Health Sciences

Paul Ciarlariello, Manager, Research, Analytics & Reporting

Angela Currier, Chair/Professor, Biology

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Tonja Fote, Nurse Manager, Inpatient Trauma Unit, Miami Valley Hospital

Furaha Henry-Jones, Associate Professor, English

Karl Hess, Chair/Professor, Mathematics

Tina Hummons, Registrar, Registration and Student Records

Elizabeth Orlando, Interim Dean, Business and Public Service

Amy Samborsky, Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

Sandy Specht, Associate Professor, Biology

Gwen Stevenson, Director, Nursing Programs, Clark State Community College

**Department Members Present:**

Rena Shuchat, Dean, Health Science

Jan Main, Chair/Professor, Nursing

Faculty and Staff:

Cecilia Bidigare

Julia Clark

Brandy Cottrell

Michelle Cox

Tammy Czyzewski

Vicky Gaffney

Vivian Jackson

Wanda Jelus

Michelle Kinzeler

Rian Kyles-Stewart

Pamela Linker

Tammy Lowe

Susan Miller

Kathy Mills

Tina Partin

Kathy Petersen

Michelle Reynolds

Molly Roll

Polly Roll

Cindy Schoonover

**Commendations**

* This is a department that has undergone a tremendous amount of change in recent years – semester conversion represented a complete overhaul of the curriculum, and then the department chose to overhaul the curriculum yet again a few years later, implementing a concept-based curriculum that represented a change just as great, if not greater. That the department has managed that change so well, and through exhausting transitions continues its ever reliable high level of quality, is a testament to a number of factors – strong leadership by the department chairperson and the division dean, the professionalism and resilience of the entire faculty, and the commitment to preparing students evidenced by the faculty. It takes a high-functioning, high-quality department to achieve what they have accomplished.
* The prestige that this department has in the region is phenomenal. Sinclair’s Nursing Department is universally admired in the area, and its sterling reputation does immeasurable good for the College as a whole. As one of the best-known programs at the College, the respect and esteem that local healthcare providers have for the department draws students not only to their department, but to the overall College. It is difficult to overstate the impact of the department’s reputation on Sinclair, and that reputation only comes with a great deal of work, dedication, and commitment by the faculty in the department.
* Part of the department’s excellent reputation is due to the strong relationships that have been forged with community partners. These relationship enable the department to be highly attuned to the needs to the needs of local employers, and to the health care environment as a whole in the Dayton region.
* The Review Team was very impressed by the level of support that the department provides to students. In particular, the Review Team was impressed by the Nursing Success program, whereby students who struggle in NSG 1400 and 1600 are given the opportunity to meet with faculty for review of concepts, a chance to learn test taking strategies, receive mentoring, and receive access to other resources. It speaks well of the department’s commitment to students that they are willing to make this additional time-intensive effort to help more of their students succeed.
* The department takes a thoughtful approach to both its current and prospective students. As an example, during the meeting with the Review Team the department was asked about admissions requirements and the possibility of selective admission for the program, and it was clear that the department had reflected on the extent to which academic factors may not necessarily always predict which prospective students will make the best nurses. The recognition that not all of the key characteristics for success are captured by grades and exam scores, and that there needs to be opportunities for less-academically successful students who nonetheless have the potential to be highly skilled and empathetic nurses to enter the program, speaks wells of the department’s ability to see its students and potential students as individuals rather than just numbers.
* The department’s extraordinary commitment to students often extends beyond a faculty member’s time at Sinclair – the Review Team was extremely impressed that several retired faculty return to campus to mentor Nursing students.
* This was an extremely well-written Program Review self-study, one that can serve as an example for other departments to follow, and that appears to have been facilitated by the teamwork and cooperation that went into its development. The Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats section of the self-study was especially strong. It is evident that the department has a keen awareness of its strengths, and a willingness to candidly discuss and address weaknesses and opportunities. This capacity for self-reflection and willingness to discuss and address challenges is an important component of the department’s drive for continuous improvement. This was particularly evident in the department’s work to combat the mistaken impression among potential students that there was still a three to four year waitlist to get into the Nursing program. Addressing this misconception was crucial to attracting students to the program, and the department deserves praise for proactively and effectively working to change this misperception.
* The department does exceptional assessment work. Excellent data was provided indicating a strong assessment program for general education and program outcome assessment. In addition, outstanding work is done with assessment of course outcomes. The department also does a nice job of employing data to help individual students succeed. The use of mid-curricular HESI data to help identify knowledge gaps and areas for improvement for individual students is also highly commendable.

**Recommendations for Action**:

* As mentioned in the Commendations, the department does a superb job of monitoring the health care environment in the region, tracking job market trends, determining employer needs, and monitoring availability of clinical sites. The department is strongly encouraged to continue to keep its finger on the pulse of health care in the region.
* Once there has been the opportunity to collect data on outcomes, the department is strongly encouraged to share best practices from its Nursing Success program for struggling students. Other departments at Sinclair could benefit from offerings via the Center for Teaching and Learning, Fall Faculty Professional Development Day, and other internal forums. Additionally, the department should seek opportunities to share their success with this program with broader, external audiences, perhaps at the Innovations Conference, the Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting, and other national conferences.
* That retired faculty have come back to mentor Nursing students is highly laudable, but may not be sustainable. What permanent structure for supporting students along these lines could be made available? The department should continue to encourage retired faculty to work with students, but should also explore the development of institutional resources that could provide this support on a permanent basis. For example, the department could explore recruiting upper level Nursing students to serve as tutors for struggling students.
* In the conversation with the Review Team, the department noted that their student demographics do not reflect that of the local community. The department needs to attract more diverse students. The department is strongly encouraged to develop a formal diversity plan with specific strategies designed to increase diversity in the program. Targeted outreach to specific high schools in the area may be one strategy worth exploring. The Review Team recommends that more faculty from the department participate in the CTL Diversity and Inclusion track. In addition, can we leverage existing faculty to help potential minority students see Nursing as a viable option for them? Could we use community and business partnerships with entities like Premier to somehow help in this regard?
* In the meeting with the Review Team, the department noted that it feels that its complement of full-time faculty has grown too thin. In light of resource constraints for the College overall, the department is encouraged to make a case for the need for additional faculty. The department should carefully consider what evidence would best make this case, and perhaps benchmark comparative data with Nursing programs at other institutions. Any recommendations that the department develops in this regard should be reasonable, taking into account the budget constraints and needs of the College overall.
* The department expressed a knowledge gap regarding outcomes for its graduates in terms of transfer – the Review Team recommends that the department work with Research, Analytics, and Reporting (RAR) to get National Student Clearinghouse data on its graduates, and report transfer outcomes in Annual Updates in the coming years, and in the next Program Review.
* The Review Team notes that the decrease in NCLEX scores is a serious concern. While the self-study indicated that the department has established an action plan to improve First-Time Pass Rates, and the Review Team recognizes that efforts are currently underway and appear to be moving scores in the right direction, the Review Team strongly encourages the department to closely monitor these efforts and analyze their impact. If NCLEX scores do not improve as a result of these efforts, the department should immediately develop additional strategies and monitor their impact. The faculty are aware of the importance of these scores and their potential impact on program accreditation, but the Review Team feels this should be reinforced in these recommendations.

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

Sinclair is extremely fortunate to have such an excellent Nursing program with such a superb reputation among local health care providers. Sinclair is justifiably proud of its Nursing program, and the department should also be very proud of the considerable respect it continues to earn among students, the Sinclair community, and the Dayton region. That respect only continues thanks to the hard work and dedication of the department faculty, whose conscientious but caring approach not only provides students with marketable skills, but does so at a level of quality that is extraordinary.

There is little the Review Team could recommend that the department is not already doing. The most important recommendation that could come from this Program Review process would be to encourage the department to continue to do what it has always done, to maintain the same level of quality and strong commitment to students, to maintain the focus on continuous improvement that it has always had, and to continue to develop and nurture the connections in the healthcare community that have allowed it to be so successful at understanding and meeting local needs.

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

* Faculty members discussed the challenges associated with exam item analysis in eLearn. The department described functionality they previously had in Angel that they no longer have in eLearn, which impacts some of the exam item analyses that are required by their accreditation. How can Sinclair work with eLearn to restore some of the capabilities that are needed by departments that were available in our previous Learning Management System?
* The Nursing Department is one of several Health Sciences departments that rely on relationships with local facilities to provide clinical experiences for their students. Many departments report additional competition for limited clinical experiences from other higher education providers. How can Sinclair provide support for these departments? Does the institution perhaps need to explore the feasibility of high-fidelity simulation to provide clinical experiences in its health sciences programs?
* In the current funding environment, many departments contend with staffing challenges for faculty. How can departments document the need for additional faculty in consideration of enrollment and institutional funding considerations? What guidance could the institution provide to departments who want to demonstrate the need for additional faculty?