

Nutrition Education Program's Response to the Review Team's Report

By Damon Joyner and David Aguilar-Alvarez

Introduction: The Nutrition Education program's faculty and staff appreciate the time and efforts of the review team. The review team found several strengths of the program and made some suggestions for improvement. Below is a summary of the commendations and recommendations, and our program's response to suggestions.

Standard A: Mission Statement

The reviewers had no recommendations for this section. They highly commended the program's exceptional job creating initiatives and designing curriculum, which provides several options to meet the needs of all students with interests and career goals in nutrition.

Response: We thank the review team for the positive and supportive feedback. Faculty strive to operate with student success in mind and are glad their efforts are on track.

Standard B: Curriculum

The review team acknowledges that our curriculum is consistent with our mission statement and appreciated the detailed tables outlining the requirements for each of the program's four degree options.

Recommendations: Continued emphasis on reducing the number of adjunct instructors with classes taught by full-time faculty, and there appears to be a bottleneck with availability of CHEM 1210 course.

Response: Following the review, our program emphasizes reducing our pool of adjunct instructors and utilizing full-time faculty when possible. During the Spring of 2023, we hired a full-time tenure track faculty that will reduce the number of adjunct faculty. A goal of the program is to have at least two full-time faculty who can teach any given course.

The university has required time slots and days for courses to be taught. When scheduling courses, the program takes into consideration other factors such as faculty time, student demand, classroom availability, and budgetary support. Following the program review, the program conducted surveys to identify blocks and bottlenecks for students in completing their degrees. We are currently working on an initiative alongside Jessica Oyler to find a solution to this issue. Ideas to be explored are; saving some class slots for nutrition education majors and proposing to the chemistry department the possibility of offering a full summer semester CHEM 1210 and CHEM 2310. Currently, those two courses are only POT2 or POT3. Having these classes as full semesters rather

than 7 weeks accelerated could result in increased enrollment of nutrition majors and better success rates.

Standard C: Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

There were no recommendations for this section. The review team was impressed with the detailed tables showing Nutrition Program Learning Outcomes. Each course in the curriculum was rated on the concepts and competencies, with specified exam scores to show that students are meeting expectations. The program has a robust system in place for gathering evidence of learning on a regular basis across the program. The program demonstrates a strong commitment to aggregating and reporting this data, which is an important aspect of evaluating the overall effectiveness of the program.

Response: We are grateful for the positive feedback and will continue to utilize and assess learning outcomes.

Standard D: Academic Advising

The reviewers rated our academic advising overall as good, but had some suggestions for improvement.

Recommendations: With relevance to students staying on track, it was recommended that academic advising be made mandatory for students or at least one visit with an academic advisor per year.

Response: We think this is a great idea. Following this recommendation, our program is working on student requirements to have at least one advising meeting during the first year as a declared major. This will provide a preview of the program, goals for the pathway to graduation, and what to expect and prepare for in the semesters ahead. This plan is aligned with the university's mandatory advising goal.

Standard E: Faculty

The review team's response here was mostly positive, acknowledging that our program has demonstrated efforts to be diverse in its faculty, the collegial spirit amongst colleagues that was evident in the time visiting. They made positive mention of our annual faculty reviews and participation in professional conferences.

Recommendations: Cost of living is a challenge along the Wasatch Front. The starting salary for tenure-track faculty is insufficient for a reasonable standard of living.

Another area mentioned was the need for new faculty to get to know tenured faculty and receive more guidance and mentoring through the tenure process.

Response: We agree that given the current economic circumstances and inflation, the cost of living in the Ogden area is quite a challenge, especially for new faculty. We agree that the current starting salary for a tenure-track assistant professor is not sufficient to support a reasonable standard of living, but we are appreciative of the efforts the university and college make to provide cost of living and merit-based salary raises.

Our program (along with our college) has implemented a new system of peer-mentoring, where senior faculty will mentor and guide new faculty members. This peer-mentoring program is relatively new for us but we are starting to see its benefits. We will continue to put an emphasis on having senior member guide new faculty.

Standard F: Program Support

The feedback from the review team was mostly positive. It was noted that there are significant funds available to support requests for faculty equipment. These funds can significantly contribute to improving the teaching effectiveness by providing faculty with the necessary tools and resources to enhance instructional practice. Faculty also have many opportunities to be funded for professional development activities to attend conferences and present their work.

Recommendation: More stability in the lab managers was emphasized as an area of need and moving this position from part-time to full-time.

Response: We appreciate the positive response. We are currently working to secure sustainable funding for a full-time position for lab managers in our department. We are expecting to have a permanent full-time ENS lab manager by the fall of 2023.

Standard G: Relationships with External Communities

There were no recommendations in this section. The review team had positive feedback regarding our program's relationships with external communities. These relationships allow for internships and capstone experiences for students.

Response: Thank you for the feedback. We have and will continue to work to maintain good relationships with our external communities.

Standard H: Program Summary

Overall, a very good program and meets the needs of students. The program should be commended for the comprehensive curriculum that includes timely classes to reach employable skills to students. Additionally, the program has done an excellent job establishing external outreach and building relationships with community organizations, which provides students with valuable experiences as they complete their educational journey.

Recommendation: The only suggestions would be as follows: a) revisit tenure track faculty starting salary given present economic circumstances, b) revisit advising requirements for students, possibly make it mandatory, c) continue work on reducing the number of adjunct instructors.

Response: As noted, we have and will continue to make efforts to improve our program according to these recommendations. We thank the reviewers for their time, effort, insight, and comments.