

## Associate of Science in Health Sciences Program

**Review Date:** April 29-30, 2021

**Review Team:**

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**Overview:**

The Review Team met with faculty and staff within the Department of Health Sciences in the afternoon of April 29th to discuss the Health Sciences (HTHS) program. After the review team was introduced and the itinerary was reviewed, the review team met first with the department chair, Dr. Travis Price. We then met with the HTHS faculty as a group, which consisted of Justin Burr, Jim Hutchins, Kathy Newton, Marvin Orrock, and Brad Winterton. This meeting was then followed by two staff meetings with the administrative specialist, Chris Housley, and the lab manager, Pamela Silberman, respectively. At the end of the first day, Pamela Silberman and Justin Burr provided us with a virtual tour of the facilities at both the Main Campus and Davis Campus. Approximately 30 minutes of working time was then provided to the review team to discuss the information gathered from the afternoon, and develop a plan for gathering our assessments and findings at the end of the site visit.

On the morning of April 30<sup>th</sup>, the review team reconvened and met with several current students in the HTHS program. After that meeting, the review team had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Yasman Simonian (Dean) and Dr. Ken Johnson (Associate Dean) of the Dumke College of Health Professions to discuss both the current and future status of the Health Sciences program within the college. Meetings then concluded with Eric Neff of the College of Health Professions Academic Advisement office. Afterwards, a second work session was provided to the review team. At the end of the morning, the review team had a closing meeting with Dr. Price to discuss some of the general findings and the timeline for our final report.

**Standard A – Mission Statement:**

**Strengths:** The mission statement within the HTHS program self-study is well constructed. The goals of the program are clearly outlined and aligned with the mission of the Dumke College of Health Professions. It is also written in a fashion that can be easily interpretable by students. The education program is accommodating to students from both pedagogical and economical perspectives. The curriculum is nicely organized and defined within the Catalog. Students identified consistency in the prerequisite curriculum and excellence of teaching quality as

strengths in preparing them for their individual programs. We have copied/pasted your updated mission statement below for your convenience.

“The mission of the Department is to facilitate the foundational learning that empowers individuals to be successful health professionals. We are committed to providing experiences that promote hands-on learning, critical thinking, interprofessional collaboration, evidence-based problem solving, and ethical and compassionate patient care. Course experiences are provided in a variety of formats, at affordable costs, and with measurable learning outcomes to ensure opportunities for success among all student populations. Students completing the rigorous health science courses will enter their chosen health professions program with effective study habits and a solid foundation of how the human body works.”

**Areas for Improvement:** Their main concern of the review team was locating the mission statement within weber.edu. The Health Sciences mission statement from the prior program review is located at this web address:

[https://www.weber.edu/ie/Results/Health\\_Science.html](https://www.weber.edu/ie/Results/Health_Science.html)

but it is different from the current HTHS program self-study.

**Recommendations:** Although the review prefers the updated mission statement from the self-study, it is recommended that it be located somewhere within the Department of Health Sciences website.

### **Standard B Curriculum:**

**Strengths:** The faculty and administrators have thoughtfully developed courses that adequately satisfy general education requirements and as prerequisite coursework for professional programs within the college. Degree tracks have been created within the curriculum (see Catalog), which provides a defined curriculum for each student, depending on their professional program of interest. Furthermore, grad (degree) maps are available for each professional program within the college. Overall, the curriculum is consistent with the program’s mission statement and provides a strong foundation to the pre-professional student.

**Areas for Improvement:** A consistent theme that came up during this review was the lack of physical space. Due to the strong interest and very high student enrollment, a need for additional classroom and laboratory space was identified.

**Recommendations:** Besides the obvious recommendation of having the college develop additional classroom and lab space for HTHS courses, the review team has limited alternative recommendations to the problem of limited space. During the pandemic, there was a shift from classroom to online courses, which opened classroom and laboratory space to those courses

where face-to-face instruction is essential. It is recommended that the program continue to offer more blended classroom settings instead of classroom or asynchronous online sections. As a result, an increased number of students could be enrolled concurrently in the courses, the number of students in the lecture halls would be reduced, and lab activities could be scheduled with the adjacent lab courses already scheduled.

### **Standard C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments**

**Strengths:** The program has well-defined learning outcomes, which are directly connected to core courses within the program's curriculum. These connections can be clearly observed within Evidence of Learning matrices located within the current self-study document. These courses introduce, emphasize, and/or provide mastery content relative to the 13 learning outcomes of the program (see page 4 of self-study). Learning outcomes are measured through unit quizzes and written examinations that are assigned to students within the core coursework. Courses within the program also support general education at WSU (HTHS 1110 LS) and concurrent enrollment at high schools in the Wasatch area. We commend the department for offering a lower division course to students that exposes them to interprofessional collaboration early during their college education. Lastly, the review team believes that the course changes made to HTHS 1110 and HTHS 1111 deserve high praise. By developing an internal (open-access) course study guide/packet, they save students \$290 in required course materials. Furthermore, they have revised the Canvas content for these two courses so that it intuitively complements the course study guide/packet and fosters effective studying strategies for students. The review teams view these changes as cutting-edge and believe that they are an exemplary model that other programs at WSU should follow to make education more accessible to students.

**Areas for Improvement:** The high percentage (70-75%) of graduating students who are either not accepted to their program of study or lost is a weakness of the program. The review team understands that part of this is due to the limited seats available within the professional programs. However, the overall assessment of graduating students needs improvement in terms of tracking which programs these students select outside the DCHP, whether they transfer to other schools, etc. Secondly, the students expressed that they would have liked to have been given a recommended sequence for the HTHS courses. They stated that courses/labs build upon each other, but this is not well verbalized to students. Lastly, the students also mentioned that there were some quiz and exam questions that seemed outdated or were based on old course material.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that both an exit survey and an alumni survey be developed and disseminated to current and former graduates respectively. This may help measure the success of the HTHS program relative to the professional program acceptance rates and/or occupational settings of graduates. Secondly, there was discussion of establishing a

Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences degree. Although the novelty and logistics of such a program may be challenging, it would help to capture some of these students who fail to get accepted into professional programs or are lost after obtaining their AS degree. Thirdly, if the faculty agree with the students and believe that there is a “best” sequence in which HTHS courses should be taken, that they clearly define this sequence online and through advisement. Lastly, the faculty should review their quiz and exam questions to make sure that they reflect the recently revised course materials.

### **Standard D. Academic Advising**

**Strengths:** There is a clearly defined advising strategy and process. As with other programs in the college, there is a centralized advisement office that is in close proximity to the HTHS department. There are regular meetings between the admissions advisement director (Eric Neff) and department chair (Dr. Price). The strongest area of academic advisement occurs early on, when a student first declares Health Sciences a major. The advisors help students identify their professional program of interest, understand the prerequisites for that program, and develop an academic plan to position them to apply in an efficient and successful manner.

**Areas for Improvement:** A few students stated that the advising they received towards the end of the HTHS program was inadequate (or even absent) in helping them plan for application and acceptance into professional, entry-level (Bachelor of Science) programs. Although there was a minority of students who did not reiterate this complaint, the review team still highlights this as an area for improvement. This may contribute to the high number of students who are lost after graduating from the HTHS program. Lastly, the advising staff within the college is overbooked with appointments at times and the students often reap the consequences by not being able to meet with an advisor within a desired timeframe.

**Recommendations:** The advisement strategy should be communicated to students early during the declaration of the HTHS major. This will help more students understand the resources, availability, and directory of academic advising while they continue in the program. It would also be helpful to highlight the points of contact within the prospective professional programs in the college. This will help students transition from general advising to program-specific advising. Lastly, the ideal solution to increase the availability of advisors to students is to hire additional advisors. The obvious counterpoint is that there is no office space to house additional advisors within the college. However, with the adaptation of virtual meetings this year, there are likely some members of the advising staff that can provide services virtually (via Zoom). The advising staff could even interchange days of when they work on campus (in-person) vs. off campus (virtually). The advisement director has suggested hiring two full-time advisors and a part-time recruiter in order for his staff to operate more efficiently and serve students in a more timely manner.

## **Standard E. Faculty**

**Strengths:** The majority of full-time faculty hold doctoral degrees and represent a diverse set of professional backgrounds in the health sciences (see Appendix B in self-study). The faculty demonstrate a high level of engagement and care with students. Students in the program state that “the HTHS instructors take time to reach out to students and care about their success more so than faculty in other departments at WSU.” There is a high level of collaboration amongst the faculty, which is evidenced by the open-access course material that they have published. Conversely, faculty have the autonomy to teach a course section from their preferred pedagogical style. Lastly, the faculty share innovative teaching resources to facilitate learning in students. All faculty seem open to learning new technology if there is a benefit to student learning.

**Areas for Improvement:** The student to faculty ratio (45:1) is much higher in health sciences than in the university as a whole (22:1). The HTHS faculty expressed this ratio as a “crushing load.” This inflated ratio is largely due to the steady growth of students that the HTHS program has seen over the past several years, and limited growth of faculty and staff within the department. Several established faculty members expressed that they “don’t feel respected or supported by the college in terms of office space, salaries and FTEs.” This has made it difficult for the faculty to contribute adequate time and energy to service and scholarship.

**Recommendations:** An additional office space at the main campus is already planned in Summer 2021 for the one faculty member who does not have an office space on main campus. There is not an efficient solution to the high student:faculty ratio. The high enrollment of students within the HTHS program is a “good problem” for the college, but if additional faculty cannot be hired (or housed) by the college, boundaries may need to be made until those additional human resources can be provided. If capping the enrollment numbers is not an option and additional faculty (office space) cannot be provided at this time, then additional adjunct faculty should be hired to add more course sections to students and relieve the faculty. Offering more online and night sections for adjunct faculty may be an appropriate starting point. Another recommendation would be to further divide the day and night schedule for labs. Rather than having one large 12-hour block (8am-8pm), it could be converted to two discrete blocks, one during the day and one at night. Instructors who teach during the day could avoid teaching at night (unless desired). Adjunct professors could teach during the night, especially if they are working another job during the day. Essentially, each day would then be converted into two teaching days.

## **Standard F. Program Support**

**Strengths:** The support staff members that are currently employed are experienced and responsible. The department administrative specialist (Chris Housley) has had previous

administrative experience in other staff positions at WSU and has seamlessly transitioned into this current position. The lab manager (Pamela Silberman) supervises numerous lab aids for laboratories at both the main campus and Davis campus. The department is fortunate to have a support staff with excellent administrative and organizational skills. The program support for laboratory equipment seems strong, with modern and sophisticated technology being a noticeable feature within the program.

**Areas for Improvement:** The quantity of support staff is low for the high number of students that are in the HTHS program. Due to very high student enrollment, laboratory sessions are conducted daily, from morning to evening (8am-8pm), and the lab manager has had to absorb this load. Due to the advisement office being overbooked, the administrative specialist has done her best to advise students beyond her position's responsibilities. She should not have to take on the burden of the advisement office. Although the laboratory equipment is impressive, the quantity of equipment may be lower than what is needed to serve the quantity of students in a given lab. A student being unable to practice lab skills due to a limited quantity of lab equipment is a concern of the lab manager.

**Recommendations:** Hiring an additional staff member to support the lab manager is the most pertinent recommendation from the review team. This can be fulfilled by either hiring a part-time administrative specialist for lab management or a student (hourly or 50/50) to assist with some of the lab manager's responsibilities. Additionally, the lab manager position should be converted from a part-time to full-time position. If additional academic advisors cannot be hired within the advisement office, a student (hourly or 50/50) should be hired to assist the department's administrative specialist. Lastly, additional equipment should be purchased to accommodate the increasing student enrollment numbers.

### **Standard G. Relationships with External Communities**

**Strengths:** The HTHS program is not a professional program that requires external accreditation from a national organization. In addition, students in the HTHS program do not have clinical requirements to fulfill. For these reasons, it is not as important for the HTHS program to develop relationships with external healthcare communities as it is for professional programs at WSU. However, we commend the department for exploring possible partnerships with local/regional healthcare organizations to gain education support and access to alternative teaching facilities.

**Areas for Improvement:** An external advisory community has not yet been established.

**Recommendations:** Continue to explore opportunities to partner with local/regional healthcare organizations to strengthen the growing HTHS program. Establish an external advisory committee that consists of faculty and staff from professional programs outside of WSU. This

will aid the relevancy of the HTHS program and provide knowledge relative to alternative professional programs outside of WSU.

### **Standard H. Program Summary**

- A. The program must show how it has implemented any recommendations from the previous review and what effect these changes had on the program. If any recommendations were not implemented the program should explain why they were not put into place.

**Strengths:** Since the previous program review, the HTHS program has developed and implemented strategies to address some of problems that were identified in 2016 by the review team. The mission statement was revised to better embody the role that the HTHS program has within the Dumke College of Health Professions. New technology and equipment were acquired to improve instruction in HTHS 1110 and HTHS 1111 courses. The additional lab space has allowed instructors to accommodate the growing student enrollment and course sections. Lastly, the increase in lab aides has shown to be effective in facilitating one-on-one instruction and absorbing some of the load from the lab instructors.

**Areas for Improvement:** With over 70% of graduates not being accepted into their professional program of interest (or lost), tracking of students who graduate from the program should be investigated. Alternative routes for these students should be established and communicated. The communication and availability of academic advising to students in the HTHS program require improvement. Students need to be well supported by advisement so that they are confident when it comes to applying to professional programs. The growing student enrollment in the HTHS program has become a beast that cannot be maintained by the current size of the department (faculty and staff). The HTHS program is the cornerstone of many professional programs in the college. To continue serving the college at a high level, building space and human resources needs to be expanded.

**Recommendations:** The creation of exit and alumni surveys will help to track the education status and success of graduates from the HTHS program. Students who have not been accepted into their professional program of interest (or lost) should be provided with alternative options or supported in their continued pursuit of their original plan if that is their prerogative. Additional (at least two full-time) academic advisors should be hired in the advisement office. If office space is a limitation to this, advisors can alternate their daily advisement between campus and virtual meetings. If advising responsibilities are a part of the HTHS department administrative specialist's roles, a student worker (hourly, 50/50, etc.) should be hired to assist the administrative specialist. There should be a part-time lab assistant assigned to the current lab manager to accommodate the current lab schedule and increased lab seats. Limited office and classroom space is the thorn for every department within the college, and there does not seem to

be an immediate solution on the horizon. With limited classroom space and growing enrollment of students, the HTHS program should attempt to convert as many courses as possible to a blended format and offer additional course sections taught by adjunct faculty at night. If this is not sustainable, capping the enrollment should be considered until additional office space is available and faculty lines can be added. A recommendation for the college regarding the issue of physical space is to analyze space utilization. It seems that the School of Nursing utilizes the majority of space in the Marriott building, which is justified by their quantity of programs and size of their faculty/staff. If a new building becomes an option in the near future, the review team recommends that the School of Nursing be housed in their own building. This would open up office, classroom, and laboratory space in the Marriott building, and allow for the additional faculty and staff that are necessary to support the HTHS department. The HTHS program serves so many professional programs in the college, and the faculty of these programs often express gratitude for the quality of students that come out of the HTHS program. However, for it to continue serving as a cornerstone program of the college, the needs of the HTHS program merit support from the college.