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TO: Havidán Rodriguez
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and International Program

FROM: Rick Hall
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SUBJECT: Heath Studies Permanent Status Program Review

Objectives, Strengths, and Weaknesses

The major is compatible with the Academic Priorities of the University of Delaware. The students receive a quality education as documented by their success in the clinical practicums and job placement upon graduation. The program also has a graduation rate above the national average.

The strength of the major is that it provides students with a broad overview and background in healthcare. The major gives graduates flexibility in job opportunities and professional or graduate schools but is not intended simply to provide a general degree for students without specific health-related career goals. With the nationwide shortage of healthcare professionals, this major may help meet the need for more entry level healthcare professionals.

Impact and Demand

We do not foresee this major having a significant impact on other programs at the University, including those within the College of Health Sciences. The self study specifically states that this area of concern is addressed by limiting the enrollment and carefully screening students to be sure they have a broad interest in healthcare.

It is difficult to comment on the admission requirements since none were stated in the self-study. It is proposed to design a web site for Health Studies that will give students pertinent information including admission procedures, career options, and curriculum progression; this item should be addressed expeditiously. [We did find analogous information about the admission process for the combined BS/MS degrees in Health Studies & Occupational Therapy in the self study and at the website. The admission process for this option is clearly stated and fair.]

It appears there is a clear demand for the major. Initially the program had a stated limit of 15 students, and at present the intake is approximately 5 per year, with a total of 15 students currently enrolled in the major. It was not stated how many students apply to the program each year and how competitive acceptance is. One option, BS/MS degrees in Health Studies & Occupational Therapy, has been added in conjunction with Thomas Jefferson University and another one is being pursued. The addition of these two options should increase demand. It is noted that competition for the present BS/MS option, which will begin next year, was intense with 10 students being accepted out of 150 applicants.

Advising is currently administered by the assistant dean in the College of Health Sciences. With the current number of students in the program, the assistant dean should be able to provide advisement needed along with her other duties. The present option is limited to an enrollment of 10 per year by limitations at Thomas Jefferson University. However,

with the addition of another option in addition to the present BS/MS option, and the potential of more students, the issue of advisement may need to be addressed.

It seems from the self study that additional expenses are not required from the students. However, additional expenses may be needed for the practicums. These expenses could include transportation, parking, and housing, depending on the location of the practicum.

The program has the support of the College faculty. Letters of support from the dean of the College, the chair of the Department of Health Nutrition and Exercise Sciences, and the assistant director of the School of Nursing were included in the self study. A letter of support has been solicited and promised from the Department of Medical Technology though this Committee has not yet received a copy of this letter.

Resources appear to be sufficient to support and maintain the program since the majority of students in the Health Studies major have come from other majors already within the College of Health Sciences. The dean of the College has pledged her support. There was no mention of any difficulties with enrollment limits in any of the required courses. However, it was not stated if the current limit of 15 students would be changed to accommodate more students in the two new options.

Evaluation

The program does address some of the ten goals of General Education at the University of Delaware. The curriculum includes courses in technology; the students are required to take MEDT 210 Information Technologies and Communication Skills or HESC 276 Technology in Health and Physical Education. The self study states that skills in communication and quantitative reasoning are also taught. The required practicums provide students with a capstone as well as a discovery learning experience. The self study states that the practicums also provide the opportunity to develop collaborative skills, presumably by interacting with practicing health professionals. Students meet goal four by enrolling in a required ethics class.

The description of the major in the undergraduate catalogue describes the major as a broad-based degree designed for students interested in a health-related career. It lists foundation courses as being from the sciences, humanities and social sciences, with additional courses from Departments within the College of Health Sciences. We could not locate a more specific description addressing the values and skills graduates are expected to obtain.

One way the program assesses the learning outcomes of the graduates is by performing exit interviews. Students report their employment and graduate activities. Additional assessment methods may be needed. The self study states that the graduation rate, 76%, is above the national average. Graduates have found employment in a number of health related fields including perfusionist, pharmaceutical sales, and manager of a fitness center. In addition, graduates have continued their education in accelerated nursing program, occupational therapy masters program, dental school, and chiropractic school.

Conclusion

We find that the Health Studies major fulfills the requirements to be granted permanent status.