

Department of Health Science (HESC)
Program Performance Review (PPR) - Department Response to Dean's Report
February 6, 2017

The department is pleased to see the level of alignment between the PPR site visit report and Dean Roades' report, and have summarized our responses below.

Department Strengths. We appreciate the dean's recognition of our department's many strengths and capacities. We are in agreement that our strengths include outstanding teacher-scholar faculty, proven undergraduate curricula, robust student learning outcome assessments, course-based and individual student advising, and long-term planning to remain current in the discipline. We appreciate the dean's recognition that these strengths have come despite enormous challenges regarding limited full-time faculty numbers (only 19, including only 16 tenured/tenure track faculty), relatively fast growth in numbers of student majors (numbering over 1600), few support staff, and very limited office and lab space.

Areas to be Addressed. We agree that our ongoing challenges include growth management in the numbers of undergraduate students, and resource limitations in faculty, staff, classroom and lab space). We are also very aware of the ongoing needs of our students to progress in a timely manner through degree completion, particularly since our students often learn about the health science major only after accruing enormous numbers of units in other majors. While graduation rates for our transfer students are similar to those in other College of HHD departments, first time freshmen experience delays because of their late change in majors. We are very hopeful that our ongoing university-wide efforts and collaborations, such as through our two 100-level GE courses and the former Freshman Program, will continue to expose students to the major. We are also in the midst of realigning our department name and curricula to make more-apparent the focus on public health, to be implemented ideally by fall 2018. Beyond these strategies that we control, we are hopeful that the university, college, and other departments will continue to assist health science students through earlier identification of appropriate change-of-majors and/or other strategies

Recommendations. We thank Dean Roades for her support of the department as summarized in the five recommendations regarding growth management, resources, tenure-track hiring, student and program assessment, and student success outcomes. We are proud of our history of judicious budget spending, shared lab space usage to maximize student involvement in research and other high-impact co-curricular activities, and curriculum innovation (e.g., via online and hybrid modalities) to accommodate our growing numbers of majors. However, we believe that the department has exhausted all creative internal approaches to addressing pressing needs, and cannot sustain our successful track record without additional office, class and lab space (including a wet lab to support faculty in our Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety track). We also have shortfalls in staffing to support student success efforts as well as activities of our three centers (Center for Cancer Disparities Research, Fibromyalgia and Pain Management Center, and the Center for the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles and Obesity Prevention). We believe our long-term goals and activities are well-aligned with the Strategic Plans of the University and the College of HHD, and look forward to continuing our planning in collaboration with college and university leaders so that we can continue to educate students who go on to meaningful entry-level positions in clinical and community settings, and/or graduate study in health-related disciplines.