



Northern Illinois University

2023 Program Review Report

June 2023

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PROGRAM: SPECIALIST IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Date of last review: 12/01/2022

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Specialist in School Psychology (SSP) is a new degree (approved by the HLC in March 2021) that occurs at the culmination of what formerly was our M.A. + 30 credit hour program in School Psychology. The creation of the certification formalized the requirements, helped to simplify the description of the program to prospective students and potential employers, and aids students in maintaining financial aid while completing post-Master's requirements. Those who complete the program are eligible for the Illinois "Professional Educator License" with the "School Psychologist" endorsement and now graduate with an SSP degree instead of graduating with a Master's degree and accruing 30 credits past the M.A. to obtain licensure. Our latest National Association of School Psychologist (NASP) program self-study was due in September 2021, and we received full approval from February 1, 2022 to February 1, 2029.

School psychologists are trained in behavioral and mental health interventions, academic interventions, assessment, data collection and analysis, school-wide practices to promote learning, consultation, crisis preparedness, special education ethics and law, and many other key skills to support students' positive adjustment. 100% of our SSP program graduates are working as educationally licensed school psychologists in public schools. There is currently a local, state-level, and national shortage of school psychologists. For example, there are currently 142.3 unfilled positions for school psychologists in Illinois (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2022). Our program is helping create graduates that contribute to an area of great need.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The SSP program has had between 8 and 10 students enrolled over each of the past three years, limited in capacity by faculty and staff support and funds for graduate student stipends. As planned, we aim to enroll four new SSP students each year with those students graduating three years later with the SSP and a Professional Educator License, School Psychologist endorsement. We graduated 5 students in May 2020, 4 in May 2021, and 4 in May 2022. Since 2020, 41% of the students enrolled in SSP have been from traditionally underrepresented racial and cultural backgrounds including students who are Native American, Black, Hispanic/Latino(a), and one student who is Muslim. All these students have either graduated or are currently making excellent progress toward their degree.

The SSP program is helping to attract students from diverse backgrounds into the field of school psychology in part through supplying financial aid. In the past 10 years, 100% of our students in the SSP program have received financial support from teaching and research assistantships, fellowships, and grants. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recently awarded our program funding for SSP students' stipend, tuition waiver, allowance for book costs, and travel funding. In addition, another \$1.1 million grant just ended that supported 20 school psychology scholars with their M.A./Specialist-level degree. In fact, since 2015, only one cohort (the first SSP

graduates) was not funded on training grants and that cohort of four students did have full assistantship funding from the Department of Psychology and a tuition waiver from NIU. We are immensely proud of our ability to provide unique training experiences that focus on diversifying the field to be more representative of K-12 students in schools, to support students' development, and the ability to fund our students either through assistantships or training grants.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

(Not applicable, given first review since program's start)

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

As mentioned, a critical need for the region and nation is the training of more school psychologists, and federal funding opportunities have become available to address the shortages. In December 2022, the school psychology faculty were awarded a \$5.1 million mental health demonstration grant to pilot an SSP program that serves currently working educators who want to get licensed as school psychologists. This grant will allow us to pilot a distance learning and collaborative model of training with area school districts to help address the shortage of school psychologists in our region. It builds upon our strong partnerships with local school districts to create a reliable pipeline for us to recruit for this pilot and will provide our students access to meaningful training opportunities during school and for employment. The new specialist in school psychology degree helps meet the University's pursuit of innovative and productive programs while at the same time, training more school psychologists for licensure.

We currently have no concerns for the sustainability of the program. In fact, given the high need for school psychologists in the region, it would be excellent to grow our program. This review has clarified some challenges related to the limited number of faculty in the program and the high number of courses required for students in the program to meet requirements from several accrediting and oversight bodies (Illinois State Board of Education licensure requirements, National Association of School Psychologist certification requirements, and Council on Accreditation of Educator Preparation requirements). We will continue to pursue ways to streamline students' requirements and pursue opportunities to combine resources for some courses or other opportunities to streamline.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The Specialist in School Psychology is a new degree that provides excellent training for students pursuing the Illinois "Professional Educator License" with the "School Psychologist". The program has started strongly, meeting the predicted enrollments and graduation. A particular strength of the program is their ability to secure external funds for their graduate students to attend NIU and diversify the field of professional school psychologists in Illinois.

PROGRAM: BACHELOR OF GENERAL STUDIES

Date of last review: 02/01/2014

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) program provides a structured yet flexible interdisciplinary degree option for a diverse student population that includes traditional college-age young adults, older adults who are part-time students with full-time jobs and careers, people who started but did not complete college degrees, and students with intellectual interests that lend themselves to a broad-based major rather than a specific field. Taking mostly online courses, students can earn a college degree from geographically distant places and, in the case of asynchronous classes, on their own time.

The BGS program has shown strong growth in the past three academic years for which complete data are available. The program grew from 174 students (2019-2020) to 243 students (2021-2022), reflecting an average increase of 18% per year. It is now the fourth largest degree program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The graduation rate has not yet paralleled the growth in enrollment, showing only a 2% 3-year increase. Although improving graduation rates is a priority, graduation rates may trail program enrollment because the program attracts part-time students and those outside of the 4-year traditional university experience. The BGS program director is a seasoned academic advisor who makes judicious use of substitutions, transfer adjustments, and assessments of non-academic prior learning (PLA) to facilitate progress toward degree.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Between 2015 and 2022, 575 students earned BGS degrees with strong employment opportunities. Moreover, the average GPA of graduating students over the last three years is 3.14, suggesting that the students have largely been successful academically. Based on survey data from a sample of alumni, at least three-quarters of BGS graduates between 2014 and 2017 had obtained employment within six months of graduation. According to the Career Pathways Dashboard (Burning Glass), students with general or liberal studies degrees are employed in a wide variety of professions and industries: hospitality and travel, journalism, youth and career counseling, policy analysis, clerical work, and insurance, to name but a few. As the number of students in the program has increased, the variety of students and their academic interests has expanded as well.

The program growth can be traced to two populations of students—those who designate the BGS degree upon entering the institution and those who migrate from other programs. Most students in the program select the BGS program when they first enter the institution, and the number of these students has been steadily increasing in the past few years. Consistent with the university's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (2.0, Goal 2), it is expected that there will be further growth in this group of students due to targeted enrollment efforts of adult learners living in the region (e.g., paraprofessionals working in schools) and international students. Program growth can also be traced to an increased number of students who migrate from other programs at the university because they encounter various obstacles in their initial program—financial, shift in

interest, personal challenges. The BGS degree can provide a more expedient path toward graduation for these students and offer a flexible option for students to reenter the university if they stop taking classes without a degree. Given the observed and predicted growth of this program, it may be worthwhile to add a second advisor to this program to both manage advising of these students and to facilitate outreach.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

The BGS degree is inherently broad in scope, but since the past review it became clear that students would benefit from developing an area of academic focus in the form of an academic minor. This option for BGS students arose in response to students' expressed desire to have the option of declaring a minor, the availability of and choices for online courses, and the increased migration of students from other majors, many of whom had already completed minor requirements from their previous major. Beginning in Fall 2022, the BGS program has allowed students to earn interdisciplinary or disciplinary minors within CLAS. Additional changes are poised to go into effect in Fall 2023, including allowing students to earn minors outside of CLAS, and making internships and capstone projects optional rather than required elements of the program. The intent is to make the program more flexible so that it meets the needs of a wider array of students, without diminishing academic rigor.

A second change is the establishment of an agreement with an international institution (Salzburg College, a two-year institution in Austria) so that students from this institution can take online courses to complete a BGS degree through NIU. The expansion of the BGS to international students lays some groundwork for how international students more broadly may benefit from the opportunity to complete a BGS degree, also with the option of attending NIU in person (even if it were just for a semester).

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The flexibility of the BGS program helps meet the educational needs of students who might otherwise be unable to earn college degrees (e.g., working adults, full-time caregivers). This outcome aligns with NIU's stated mission to expand access to education and advance social mobility. The availability of this program for nontraditional students who often take online courses is a primary strength, but it also presents challenges. These students may need additional help orienting to the university experience overall, understanding processes, and using the technology that is necessary for their success (e.g., course management systems and student record systems). This type of support exceeds that of the program director and advisor. Initial discussions have begun about how to provide this support, including tools, materials, and modules, which align with Goal 3 of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 2.0 which aims to support access, opportunity and success for all students.

Finally, planning for a leadership transition of the BGS program due to an anticipated retirement, the college will undertake a review as to future leadership directions and staffing needed to enhance and grow the BGS programs. In conjunction with this review, the college has prioritized

this program as a key element in degree completion initiatives at NIU and has put effort into fundraising for scholarships to support students in this major.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The Bachelor of General Studies degree program is a valuable degree program that provides flexibility in pursuing and completing a college degree at NIU. The college sees this program as a key component in supporting students seeking and completing their undergraduate degree at NIU, and plans to support this program with appropriate staffing, resources, and student scholarships to complete their degree program.

PROGRAM: B.S. IN STATISTICS

Date of last review: 02/01/2023

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Bachelor of Science degree is a new degree program initiated with the creation of the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science in 2019. This degree program prepares students to become professional statisticians and data analysts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook notes that many employment opportunities for statisticians require a graduate degree, and therefore the program is also specially designed to prepare students to enter graduate programs in statistics and the data sciences. During the pandemic the department moved all instruction online, which is a major change to the program. The department faculty responded in a positive and constructive manner, translating often very technical course material into online experiences in a short amount of time, ensuring our students best chance at success.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook projects that there will be a 31% increase in the number of positions for statisticians over the next decade, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. The students receiving their B.S. degree are successful, entering graduate school in statistics or the related data science field or entering professional employment as a statistician or data scientist. Recent alumni work at a range of companies including those in the insurance, finance, and technology industries.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Enrollment in the program is still in the process of stabilizing since the time the program became independent of mathematical sciences and the recent downturn in enrollment at NIU. While statistics is traditionally a program that students tend to enter after their first year, recent data indicates that more students are now enrolling in the major when they are new to the institution. Undergraduate admission data indicates a growing overall interest in this degree. For the 2021-2022 academic year the retention rate is comparable to the rate for B.S. degrees in the college. The program continues to serve a diverse community of students with enrollment and success rates for

African American, Hispanic, and students who identify as female on the rise. The department continues to serve these students with many hands-on experiences. For example, the department offers excellent applied research experiences to undergraduate students in the program. Students also have an opportunity to earn undergraduate credit through internships. For example, one student who was very interested in sports statistics was able to participate in an internship with the NIU athletic department. Additionally, the department faculty have participated in several URAP projects, the Research Rookies program, and have supported students using the Student Engagement Fund, funded by Mentored Student Research Projects. The department faculty also regularly participate in honors capstone projects.

The degree program needs to attract larger numbers of students for it to be stable and sustainable, and in the long term the program should be able to attract many more students than it currently does. The department is determined to take a greater role in attracting students from our community college partners. Additionally advertising in the northern Illinois area including Chicago may also be a viable method for attracting new students from diverse backgrounds. Recruitment strategies must be supported by a welcoming environment for the prospective students that includes active communication with the department. The department will develop plans for exchanging information with prospective students, opening an important line of communication with prospective students and their families. The department is also committed to a long-term effort to develop and fund scholarship opportunities to support diversity in the undergraduate statistics program. The undergraduate experience in the department can be further enhanced by providing opportunities for undergraduate students to participate with the department Statistical Consulting Services.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

This program was started three years ago, and hence there is no previous review. No changes have been made to this program as a direct result of the previous review.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The main emphasis of the recommendations from this review focus on recruitment and retention with an emphasis on diversity. For the short-term goals, the department will begin working on a welcome package for new first year undergraduate students in the program and with a focus on having the students visit the department and the undergraduate advisor early in their program to develop a connection with the department and engage in student clubs and other department opportunities. The department will work toward developing agreements with local community colleges and provide direct recruitment events to talk with students about career opportunities in statistics.

One aspect of growing the program is through increasing retention of students who do enroll. The department currently provides a Statistics Assistance Center that serves undergraduate students in our service courses. The department plans to expand the support provided by the Statistics Assistance Center to include all undergraduate statistics and actuarial science courses. Another

goal is to create opportunities for training faculty and instructors to better teach diverse students. This will be accomplished by putting a renewed emphasis on professional development training courses offered by the university in the yearly evaluations. For new faculty, such training will be emphasized as part of a good teaching portfolio to be submitted as part of their tenure application. These goals will address retention problems and differences in the success rates of student from diverse backgrounds, both of which are priorities of the college and the university.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The College fully supports the continuation of the B.S. in Statistics. While the enrollments are currently low, the potential demand for the degree program due to career opportunities are promising. Beyond the actions provided above, the College will work the department to create interdisciplinary curriculum to support a data science emphasis.

PROGRAM: B.S. IN ACTUARIAL SCIENCE

Date of last review: 02/01/2023

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Bachelor of Science degree in actuarial science is a new degree program initiated with the creation of the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science in 2019. This degree program prepares students to become professional actuaries. The structure of the program and the associated classes are designed to follow the requirements of the actuarial societies in the United States. While students are earning their bachelor's degree, and during their employment with an insurance company, actuaries are required to pass a series of exams to become certified to work at different levels within the company. Preparation for the material covered on the preliminary series of exams is a key component of the degree program.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook projects that there will be a 21% increase in the number of positions for actuaries over the next decade, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. Recent alumni work at a range of companies including those in the insurance and technology industries.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Enrollment in the program is still in the process of stabilizing since the time the program became independent of the program in mathematical sciences and the recent downturn in enrollment at the NIU. Undergraduate admission data indicates a growing overall interest in this degree. For the 2021-2022 academic year the retention rate is comparable to the rate for B.S. degrees in the college. The program continues to serve a diverse community of students with enrollment and success rates for African American, Hispanic, and students who identify as female on the rise. The department continues to serve these students with many hands-on experiences. The department

offers excellent applied research opportunities and students can earn undergraduate credit through internships. Additionally, the department faculty have participated in several URAP projects, the Research Rookies program, and have supported students using the Student Engagement Fund, funded by Mentored Student Research Projects. The department faculty also regularly participate in honors capstone projects.

The degree program needs to attract significantly larger numbers of students for it to be stable and sustainable. Because the core courses in the program begin in the junior year, students from community colleges could easily continue their studies in actuarial science at NIU. Therefore, it is recommended that the department should take a much greater role in attracting students from our local community college partners. As with the statistics undergraduate program, an additional recommendation is that the department consider advertising the program in the northern Illinois area including Chicago. While this can include traditional forms of advertisement. Recruitment strategies must be supported by a welcoming environment for the prospective students that includes active communication, and the department is developing a communication strategy for with prospective students and their families. The department is also committed to a long-term effort to develop and fund scholarship opportunities to support diversity in the undergraduate actuarial science program.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

This program was started three years ago, and hence that there is no previous review. No changes have been made to this program as a direct result of the previous review.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The main emphasis of the recommendations from this review focus on recruitment and retention with an emphasis on diversity. The department will begin working on a welcome package for new first year undergraduate students who are accepted into the actuarial science program with a focus on having the students visit the department and the undergraduate advisor early in their program to develop a connection with the department and engage in student clubs and department activities. The department will work toward developing agreements with local community colleges and provide direct recruitment events to talk with students know about career opportunities in actuarial science.

On aspect of growing the program is through increasing retention of students who do enroll. The department currently provides a Statistics Assistance Center that serves undergraduate students in our service courses. The department plans to expand the support provided by the Statistics Assistance Center to include all undergraduate statistics and actuarial science courses. Another goal is to create opportunities for training faculty and instructors to better teach diverse students. This will be accomplished by putting a renewed emphasis on professional development training courses in the yearly evaluations. For new faculty, such training will be emphasized as part of a good teaching portfolio to be submitted as part of their tenure application. These goals will address retention problems and differences in the success rates of student from diverse backgrounds, both

of which are priorities of the college. Students have also expressed interest in seminar courses that can better help them prepare for upcoming actuarial science exams, specifically for Exam P/1 and Exam FM/2. This class can be a one credit hour class held during an 8-week period. A preparatory eight-week course for the P/1 exam will be offered in Fall 2023.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The College supports the continuation of the B.S. in Actuarial Science. Given that it is a new academic program, enrollments and staffing of the courses will be monitored carefully. The potential demand for the degree program are very promising due to career opportunities

PROGRAM: B.S. IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Date of last review: 03/15/2015

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

Students in the BS in Public Health majors choose one of four different emphasis areas: 1. general public health 2. health administration 3. environment and health, and 4. health promotion. General Public Health provides a broad foundation in public health, while you also pursue a minor outside the program. Health Administration focuses on interpersonal and analytical skills, as well as business and health industry knowledge necessary for work as a healthcare or public health professional. Environment and Health provides a strong background in biological and physical sciences and the ability to analyze complex situations. It helps prepare students to take positions as sanitarians, which are much in demand. Health Promotion focuses on communication skills and specialized training in techniques to promote healthy lifestyles, policies, and environmental changes. This emphasis prepares you for work as a community health educator. Practical field training is also required as part of the public health curriculum. Alumni from the program work and pursue careers in hospitals, health care management organizations, local and state health departments, nursing homes, health care accrediting agencies and nonprofit organizations. Based on the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH, 2022), statistics show a 12 percent growth in job opportunities for individuals who have a degree in public health who seek employment as a community health worker or health education specialist. It is projected that there will be around 16,000 jobs openings each year for the next decade for these two positions.

New student learning outcomes (SLO's) were developed in response to the feedback on the assessment plan provided I 2019. The SLO's were reduced from 10 to 8 outcomes. During the height of the pandemic, the health program faculty met for a planning retreat to discuss changes within the program to ensure that the needs of the students would be met within the program. Some of the short-term goals that were agreed upon was the revision of the curriculum to stay competitive with other undergraduate public health programs, and programs within NIU. There was also

discussion of a student recruitment plan being developed to increase enrollment within the program.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Over the course of three years, the program coordinator periodically collected data by phone from all graduates between fall 2018 through summer 2021. There were 16 graduates in 2018, 15 graduates in 2019, and 20 in 2020. The 2021 survey had the lowest employment rate possibly due to the unemployment rate that was associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. However, looking at each year separately, none of the years had an employment below the 80% target. For each of the three years, the percentage of the alumni who reported employment or pursuing further education was over 85%. Only one alumnus (2.4%) was unemployed by choice, and 2 alumni (4.8%) were not employed, but pursuing further education. Overall, the percentage of those employed or enrolled in further education within the last three years was 86.3%. The program will continue to collect its own alumni survey annually in Spring and keep a database for alumni postgraduate outcomes.

On February 28, 2020, a curriculum retreat was conducted to discuss the state of the program and to develop a strategic plan that ensures the continuous success of the program. During the retreat a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) was created as well as short term and long-term goals were created to improve the overall program. One of the goals that was created from the retreat was the revision of curriculum for the B.S. public health program. However, shortly after the retreat, the focus had to shift due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategic plan is again being reviewed. Both the Public Health Curriculum and Assessment Committee and the Enrollment Committee are actively exploring options to update curriculum, streamline the degree, meet the demands of the public health workforce/market, and to meet the demands of the student population. Regarding current and future research being done by faculty; One of the faculty members is currently working on two research papers related to the health, stress management, and mental health of direct care workers in the intellectual and developmental disability and long-term care fields. Regarding these topics, one external grant proposal was submitted in spring 2022, and another will be submitted in fall 2022. However, faculty research time is becoming more and more limited as course teaching loads went from 2/3 or 3/2 to 3/3 beginning in January 2021. Faculty are still conducting research and will continue to do so, but likely at a slower pace than previously.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a major shift to online teaching, and this prompted us to change the modality of the delivery of classes and course work to meet the needs of the students. The undergraduate courses are now offered in a variety of formats that include online synchronous, online asynchronous, face-to-face, and hybrid course offerings. In addition, we have a continuous review of curriculum to make sure that the courses provided within the program, reflect what is current within the public health field. The goal is to make significant changes to the degree that

maintains a competitive edge in comparison to other public health programs by spring 2023 in order to be implemented into the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Catalog.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

Several short and long-term goals have been developed for the undergraduate program. Besides the revision of the undergraduate curriculum, another short-term goal for the program is to develop a recruitment plan to increase enrollment. Both faculty and staff would be responsible for developing and implementing recruitment ideas. If student enrollment is increased, this would allow for additional class offerings and for a stronger public health workforce to meet demands. This goal was developed in 2020, however, due to the pandemic and budget cuts, this goal had to be postponed. Hopefully, with the University's normal operation resuming, we can start working towards this goal again.

In an effort to maintain a stronger undergraduate alumnus, we have made plans to collect non-NIU related contact information from graduating seniors. With this information, we hope to survey our alumni more regularly, build a stronger backbone of potential internship preceptors in the health care field, and to engage our alumni more actively in our program. This information will be collected through an existing mandatory survey given in the final semester of the degree.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The program is strengthening the curriculum to become more competitive through updated learning outcomes, curricular changes, alumni involvement, and student engagement. Exploration of accreditation may enhance the program's visibility resulting in increased student enrollment.

PROGRAM: B.A./B.S. IN WOMEN, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES

Date of last review: 02/01/2023

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The new degree program, the B.A./B.S. in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic 3 years ago during the 2019-2020 academic year. Therefore, one major change to the program over the past 3 years is delivering courses and trainings online. Pandemic conditions required that the entire curriculum be moved online for several semesters, and hence we implemented the new major entirely virtually during its first year and trained faculty and staff in online and hybrid teaching, learning, and working. Even as pandemic conditions wane, to meet the needs of our students' busy schedules and desire for flexibility, we continue to offer 40% of our courses in online format and to host a balanced mix of online and in-person programming, such as guest speakers and community-building events. For the new degree program, we developed two new courses, a research methods course and a capstone course, and updated the catalog information to reflect the new degree program. Finally, we revised

our program assessment plan, developed a curriculum map, and began collecting data for our majors in Spring 2022.

Our courses and degree program equip students with a deep understanding of historical contexts, current nuances, and future possibilities for contributing to positive change in their communities and in the workforce. Our students graduate with expertise in furthering diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across contexts. Through the study of gender (in)equity, feminism, LGBTQ+ history and rights, and activism, our major teaches transferrable skills of research, critical thinking, social change leadership, writing and communication. Our students enter the workforce in roles in management, human resources, counseling, psychology, domestic and sexual violence support services, public health, writing and media, education, law, and policy development. Between September 2019 and September 2020, Indeed job postings in the related area of diversity, inclusion and belonging have risen 56.3% (<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/diversity-inclusion-and-belonging-jobs-rise>). According the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, the top employing occupations for those graduating with a culture and gender studies degree include teachers, managers, lawyers, educational administrators, and social workers, and these occupations have a projected growth rate of 3-12% over the next 10 years (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/field-of-degree/culture-and-gender-studies/culture-and-gender-studies-field-of-degree.htm>).

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Over the past 10 years, we have experienced steady growth in enrollment in our courses, even while NIU's overall enrollment has declined. There has been a 47% increase in majors from last year to this year (from 8 to 15 majors). In Fall 2022, the Center enrolled the highest number of students among the academic diversity centers on the NIU campus by 20% and we have set a goal of reaching 25 majors in the year 2025. Our first major graduated in 2022 and by Spring of 2023 we anticipate graduating 5 majors. Based on these numbers, one immediate goal is to recruit more students to the degree program by taking advantage of all NIU-related recruitment opportunities, including open house events, majors and minors fairs, and orientations. We will also continue to offer engaging course experiences, community-building events, and high-touch advising to retain students in our programs. Growth of the degree program will be limited to 25 majors without new faculty hiring. Currently the ability to deliver our courses depends upon faculty overloads and teaching from instructors, but this model is not sustainable and reduces the ability to support research projects and teams, and participate in co-curricular activities that are important for the Center and the campus.

Our courses enroll a diverse student body in terms of gender identity, sexuality, ability, and race. The data shows no equity gap based on gender, but it is important to note that data is limited to men and women and does not represent nonbinary, gender nonconforming or transgender students. To better serve our diverse student body, CSWGS developed Pedagogical Commitments by the Center director and joint faculty, which explicitly state a commitment to enacting equitable and inclusive classroom environments and experiences. This document is now available on the

CSWGS website and is circulated among students and faculty in the Center. We have also closely collaborated with the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center to host the Queer- and Trans-Inclusive Teaching Seminar to educate inclusive teaching and learning for faculty in our network of associates.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

This is our first review.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The short-term priorities for the degree program's operations are to increase the number of majors in the degree program. In addition to taking advantage of all NIU-related recruitment opportunities, we will continue collaborations across campus to ensure we are visible to students on campus. We will also continue to offer co-curricular programming on the intersectional study of gender and sexuality, including guest speakers, faculty panels, and research workshops, leveraging our relationships with campus units such as the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, as well as other academic centers and all of Academic, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices. We will also continue offering community-engagement, action-research, and faculty-student research opportunities in our courses. These experiences are faculty-led and can find support through university grants and through our use of donor funding.

The long-term priorities for the degree program's operations are to expand and increase center's research output and prestige by establishing a research agenda for the Center as a whole and by providing opportunities for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary connection and collaboration among associates and students. The implementation of two new undergraduate research courses will support this priority by providing our students the opportunity to learn a variety of feminist and queer research methodologies used in the discipline (research methods course) and then to conduct an action research project with the guidance of a faculty mentor (capstone class). In integrating the new curriculum and faculty research, we will be able to strengthen the Center's reputation in the region as a leading undergraduate WGSS program and to collect data and assess the impact of the Center in terms of student success in the degree program and faculty research output and impact.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The College is very supportive of the B.A./B.S. degrees in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, which began in 2019. The pandemic and migration to fully online degree offerings have limited its enrollment and the development of its undergraduate community. We anticipate that the degree program will grow and would look to support that with future resources to meet the program and curricular demands.

PROGRAM: PH.D. IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Date of last review: 03/15/2023

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The CHHS PhD in Health Sciences addresses a vital shortage of individuals with research-focused PhDs prepared to be faculty in clinical programs or to support evidence-based practice in clinical settings. As an example, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recently identified a continued nurse faculty shortage, with about one-in-ten positions being vacant and most (85%) of these requiring a doctorate. A survey by the Association of Academic Health Centers likewise found faculty shortages most extensive in nursing (81% of programs) followed by allied health (77% of programs, such as physical therapy and speech language pathology). The interprofessional nature of the college-wide PhD in Health Sciences not only addresses this need across these diverse professions but also prepares graduates to work in the team contexts that best support patient outcomes and that can best advance research on multifaceted health challenges.

The program was designed with a hybrid modality, even pre-pandemic, combining face-to-face (f2f) residency weekends each semester with virtual meetings. During the f2f weekends, the first sessions of core courses take place and students meet with advisors. Subsequent course sessions and meetings are virtual. The program targets individuals with an existing graduate degree (masters, clinical doctorate) and is designed to accommodate both full-time and part-time students, giving access to working professionals. Students take at least 45 credits at NIU, including 8 credits across three core seminars, 12 credits across four research tools courses, 12 credits in courses selected to support their individualized program of study, 1 credit for candidacy exam, and 12 credits at the dissertation stage. Regular surveys confirm that students value the program's hybrid format, reporting that the face-to-face meetings allow them to establish relationships with faculty and to network with classmates. The virtual meetings and flexible timetables also facilitate those already in clinical practice to pursue a PhD while maintaining employment. Employers often support students with schedule flexibility or tuition assistance, given the value the PhD will bring to the students' job skills and organizational needs.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The program admitted its first students to start in Fall 2015. The first graduates completed the program in Fall 2018, with a total of 21 degrees conferred through Summer 2022 and three scheduled for Fall 2022. The program currently has 82 students, 34 of whom have passed the candidacy exam and are enrolled in dissertation hours. In each of the last five years, institutional data indicate that two-thirds to over three-quarters of students identified as female and the remainder as male. Nearly two-thirds identified as White, from one-tenth to one-sixth as Black or African-American, and less than one-tenth as other race-ethnicities including Asian and Hispanic or Latino.

Alumni surveys indicate that most graduates are employed by academic institutions. Over one-quarter reported starting a new position in academia and over one-third reported advancing in their

prior place of employment, after completing the program. In open-ended responses, graduates report the ways the program has met the identified need for more faculty in the health professions, one reporting having “recently transitioned to academic teaching within a doctor of physical therapy program” and another reporting now being “on the tenure track.” Alumni also report their engagement in research, such as “writing 2 published manuscripts” and “assisting in grant writing” and using their skills to “design and implement research projects.” The review also identified some areas for improvement. For instance, alumni reported a desire for more structured support at the dissertation stage and assistance in identifying online courses for their individualized program of study.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

The program has regularly implemented changes in response to its annual assessments. For instance, the director began offering prep sessions for the candidacy exams to support students’ success and implemented a dissertation proposal review process engaging a faculty member from the college beyond the committee in order to support rigor and feasibility. Faculty have also reviewed and updated core courses, including for the transition to Blackboard Ultra. And, plans were developed to emphasize content in a structured manner across core courses where students were only partially or not meeting criteria on candidacy exams (e.g., “analysis and evaluation of issues/problems”).

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The college hired a new director for the program, who started in January 2023, with job responsibilities including facilitation of student engagement at all program stages including candidacy and dissertation. One aspect of this role will be to continue to ensure regular (e.g., monthly) meetings of students at the dissertation stage and orientations for dissertation chairs. To further facilitate faculty-student engagement at the dissertation stage, and support scholarly output, the program will also continue to offer faculty development in how to publish with graduate students. And, the program will track alumni products from their dissertations as well as their other publications, presentations, and funding proposals. A steering committee is also being established with college-wide representation as another way to support engagement of research-active faculty in the program, to help identify online courses for students’ individualized programs of study, and to further support ongoing monitoring of student outcomes. And, we are completing the transition of the program’s curriculum from a school to the college level, to further facilitate college-wide program engagement.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The program has had consistent enrollment since its 2015 start with strong alumni employment trends supporting its intended niche market. The assessment feedback loop is effective resulting

in enhanced programmatic components. A steering committee may identify paths toward strengthening student supports with research activities and access to content.

PROGRAM: PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CENTER

Date of last review: 02/01/2013

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Psychological Services Center's (PSC's) mission is three-fold. Firstly, the PSC aims to provide basic training for graduate students in the Clinical Psychology program in therapy and assessment during the earliest stages of their training. Second, the PSC aims to serve the NIU and wider DeKalb community with high-quality therapy and assessment services using evidence-based practices delivered on a low, fixed fee for students, and on a sliding fee scale for community members. Last, the PSC aims to serve as a center where students and faculty can conduct research with a clinical population. The PSC is the primary training center for the Clinical Psychology PhD program, serving students in their first through third years of the PhD program. The PSC also serves the School Psychology PhD program, albeit in an adjunct manner to their primary training in the schools. Training experiences in the PSC at the nascent stages of students' graduate training allow them to gain skills to be able to work in more challenging settings. Following their training with the PSC, the graduate student clinicians go on to provide services through paid externships at community partner sites, where they serve specialty populations (e.g., children and families, individuals with primary anxiety diagnoses, neuropsychology patients, people involved with the local probation department) and receive advanced training. Graduates of the Clinical Psychology program are in high demand and almost all enter the field as mental health practitioners (most graduates in the past five years obtain work in mental health settings upon after graduation and 77% are licensed within 10 years of graduation). Employment for psychologists is projected to grow 6% from 2021-2031 (BLS). In the field of mental health generally looking to gain between 14-22% for people looking to go into careers in mental health/therapy over the same time period.

There have been several subtle changes over the past 5-8 years that combine to create pressure on the functioning of the PSC and the ability to sustain high quality training. First, there has been a reduction in tenure-track faculty as faculty have retired, thereby reducing the number of graduate students accepted into the program and supervising clinicians in the clinic. There has also been high turnover in the single office manager position (four people in the position over the past 6 years and many months of vacancy in between staffing the position). Shifting needs of students, both the NIU broader population seeking greater mental health services, and our graduate student clinicians needing more support than was needed years ago has impacted the faculty and staff's ability to train with the same amount of weekly time. With a changing client population that requires more support to supervise, it is challenging to achieve the goal of ensuring that our students get high-quality training in evidence-based practices with a focus on providing in-person and telehealth services. In addition, funding for an advanced graduate assistantship funded by the College was cut during FY20. This loss of hours to help run the clinic and see the most challenging

clients has had a significant effect on the PSC. Finally, the pandemic led to significant disruption in services. Given the very early stage of training of most clinicians in the PSC, this impact on the training and on the PSC was large. Although these challenges have all been subtle and any one of these challenges may have been able to be managed effectively, together they combine to create substantial strain on the PSC's resources at a time when demand for mental health services is especially high.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Student clinicians enter the PSC through admission into the wider Clinical Psychology graduate program, and cohort size has varied in the past 5 years such that the staff of graduate student clinicians in the PSC has ranged from 11 (Fall 2021) to 15 (Spring 2019), with a mean of 14. Student clinicians are diverse, and the Clinical Psychology program is committed to recruitment of graduate students from traditionally underrepresented groups within the field of Clinical Psychology (e.g., BIPOC individuals, people with LGBTQIA+ identities, people with disabilities, first-generation college students, and male-identifying students). Students from underrepresented groups are actively recruited into the NIU Clinical Psychology program with 12% of admitted students self-identifying as BIPOC in the past five years, an increase from 9% in the five years prior); support for these graduate students once they are recruited remains a goal of the program. For all graduate students, training in working with people with diverse backgrounds and identities is a part of the training within the PSC, and students are expected to explore their own positionality and biases that may contribute to clinical work.

Clients seen in the PSC have also varied over the past 5 years. The PSC serves both the NIU and wider DeKalb community, and the ratio of NIU to community-member clients has varied over the years. The ratio of NIU to community members is largely driven by services needed for the NIU community, which has been expanding and currently NIU-affiliated cases range from 59%-69% of all cases seen in the PSC. Most of the past 5 years, the ratio of male-to-female clients is approximately equal, with an increase in the past 3 years of clients who identify as being on the broader gender spectrum, transgender and non-binary. Although robust data on racial identity has not been consistently gathered within the PSC (i.e., clients have the option of whether or not to identify their racial identity), NIU-affiliated cases are representative of the broader NIU community with regard to racial and ethnic identity. Moreover, telehealth options have expanded the PSC's catchment area from Chicago to Rockford, to the area in Illinois close to Davenport. Diagnosis for therapy clients has changed over the past 5-10 years, with more severe psychopathology being seen in the PSC than was seen several ago (e.g., recurrent major depression, suicidal ideation, and obsessive-compulsive disorder are common diagnoses currently; in the past, adjustment disorder and unspecified depression were more commonly treated). Finally, demand for services within the PSC remains high; estimates prior to 2022 indicate that the PSC received approximately 250 requests for services annually, and were able to see approximately 70-100 of these clients per year. From January to December 2022, the PSC received over 400 requests for either therapy or assessment services, and was able to provide therapy services to 58 of these

individuals and assessment services to 43 of these individuals. Approximately 150 of those individuals who contacted the PSC were referred out, with the remaining individuals on therapy or assessment waitlists.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

While there are many things that have remained constant in the PSC since the past review in 2012, there are several notable actions and changes that have been taken in that time. First, students within the School Psychology Ph.D. graduate program are now incorporated into the training within the PSC. While their involvement is still limited to a single semester during their graduate training, the PSC is committed to further supporting the graduate students in the School Psychology program through cross training with students in the Clinical Psychology program. Second, in January 2022 the PSC implemented an electronic health record (EHR), Titanium, to support scheduling, documentation, and billing into one system. With this change, graduate students in the PSC were able to expand their training to include electronic documentation and navigating an EHR, a skill that is imperative in most health psychology settings. With Titanium, the PSC was also able to more accurately document the number of clients seeking services, gather data electronically with a patient portal, and reduce the reliance on paper systems.

Finally, the COVID-19 had many direct and indirect effects on the PSC; however, one positive effect that the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in was the use of telehealth in service delivery. The PSC's pivot to a telehealth format was somewhat slow due to the challenges with obtaining the necessary hardware and software to provide telehealth; however, once adopted, telehealth has allowed more service delivery options and allowed the PSC to provide more flexible options for people who need to be seen. As previously stated, the ability to provide services virtually has increased the PSC's catchment area for both therapy and assessment. For individuals and families with limited finances, telehealth service delivery reduces a potential barrier to treatment by the time it takes to come to the clinic and the cost of parking on campus. It also reduces the number of times people cancel due to inclement weather (e.g., cancellation rates have dropped on snowy days due to the ability to attend virtually) and illness (i.e., when clients do not wish to risk getting others ill but are well enough to participate in a session).

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

Given the high demand for services through the PSC, the continued need for high-quality training in the field of Health Service Psychology, the recruitment of diverse students, and the introduction and facilitation of telehealth technology, the PSC has several short and long-term priorities that are only attainable through increased supervision resources. An Associate Director would best serve the PSC to meet the above needs.

With the inclusion of an Associate Director, the following short- and long-term goals may be reached. In the short-term, an Associate Director would help facilitate 12-month clinic operations (the PSC currently operates on a reduced summer schedule) and sustain high-intensity training. Additional supervision options, including both group and individual supervision for graduate

student clinicians, subspecialty teams (i.e., a team focused on assessment), and advanced training in assessment and therapy would be possible. Additionally, an Associate Director would allow greater access for student clinicians to drop in for more structured support during the week.

Longer-term priorities for PSC would include better support for graduate students from underrepresented groups within Clinical Psychology. An Associate Director would allow for the creation of affinity groups for individuals from populations that are underrepresented in the field, opportunities to work across colleges and with students and directors from other mental health clinics across campus, and to provide in-depth training on telehealth service delivery and the provision of teleassessment services. The PSC has physical and digital resources to provide telehealth and teleassessment, but currently no time to support the inclusion of specialty training in this area with current resources. An Associate Director would allow the PSC to devote time in every week to development of ways to support both the graduate students the PSC trains and the clients that the PSC serves.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The psychological service center is a critical resource for the accredited graduate program in clinical psychology and a developing resource for the graduate program in school psychology. The center is the first training experiences for the graduate students on their path to becoming licensed clinical psychologists, who are in high demand in this region and nationwide, especially after the pandemic. The center supports NIU students and the larger community by providing mental health assessment and treatment. The College will work to provide additional resources to meet the needs of staffing stability for the center.

PROGRAM: M.S. NURSING

Date of last review: 03/15/2015

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The School of Nursing at Northern Illinois University currently offers a master's degree with a specialization in Nursing Education or as a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP). The program also offers a post-master's certificate in Nursing Education. The purpose of Northern Illinois University's Master of Science (MS) in Nursing program is to prepare students with broad knowledge and practice expertise in advanced practice nursing and nursing education. There have been no major changes to the master's curriculum. Admission was limited to the Nursing Education program due to a low number of applications. Therefore, the focus was placed on the Master's FNP specialization. We have seen an increase in interest to the Nursing Education Program and applications are being accepted for Fall 2023 start. The FNP program has found opportunities to increase the content being delivered remotely, including standardized patient, objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), and head-to-toe assessments). These additional

opportunities were based on observational and anecdotal feedback from students and faculty. The Graduate Curriculum Committee and Faculty led these changes. During and after COVID pandemic we lost a lot of clinical site placements and preceptors are still reluctant to have students, which has strained the program.

From a department standpoint, we have seen frequent leadership changes, with four different chairs in the past six years and three graduate directors. We have continued to hire new DNP faculty and many new instructors to teach in the master's program. For the past five years, we have seen steady trends for Master's FNP and Nursing Education Programs. From 2018 through 2022, our fall enrollment has ranged from 115 to 132, with an average of 30 degrees conferred per year.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The MS-FNP program continues evolving to deliver high-quality online education for future nurse practitioners. We continue to explore ways to increase the amount of content being delivered online, which supports the adult learner enrolled in higher education. This offers flexibility for students to work, support their families, and work-life balance. The program will begin integrating the new AACN "Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education," released in 2021.

Nursing continues to see faculty shortages across the country. In October 2022, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) reported that nursing schools in the United States (US) turned away 91,938 qualified applicants for baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs due to faculty shortages. Additionally, in a Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions released by AACN in October 2022, there were 2,166 full-time vacancies for nursing faculty identified in the US. To address the nursing faculty shortage, our Graduate Program will begin accepting applications for a Fall 2023 cohort. We will revisit the Nursing Education program and look at ways to integrate this into the DNP curriculum and offer this as an option for DNP students.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

The family nurse practitioner (FNP) program will continue to review course syllabi and course assessments and align these to the student learning outcomes (SLOs) as well as the program outcomes. The new Master's Essentials will be integrated into the courses. The AACN Master's Essentials outline the knowledge and skills that all nurses in Master's nursing programs will acquire upon graduation. The courses are aligned with these outcomes. In April 2021, AACN released its revised Master's Essentials, which will be reviewed and applied to our curriculum over the next two years. In addition, our program assessment will be revised based on the new Master's Essentials.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

As a result of this review, we intend to find opportunities to increase enrollment. We will continue to host booths at nursing and health science conferences. We are offering scholarship opportunities with priority for nursing education and Doctor of Nursing Practice candidates (up to \$10,000.00

per year). We are working with marketing to send emails to our undergraduate students and our alumni. We will explore more tracks for specialization that would appeal to a broader range of applicants. We plan to re-open the MS-Nursing Education program. Finally, we would like to create more clinical partnerships and opportunities for students, which in turn we hope will increase enrollment in our graduate programs.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

Enrollment remains strong for the master's program. Curricular and program modifications help manage environmental influences such as variable interest to a specialization and updated competencies for professional nurses. Additional content moved online may help increase enrollment.

PROGRAM: DOCTORATE OF NURSING PRACTICE

Date of last review: 03/15/2023

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The graduate curriculum committee along with the DNP task force has reviewed the curriculum and made changes to ensure students are meeting SLOs efficiently. The original curriculum, with three core didactic courses (710, 720, and 730) and three practicum courses (713, 723, 733) has been revised to merge nursing 720 into nursing 710 and merge the three practicum courses into nursing 743. Nursing 743 is the new practicum course, which will be taken continuously, until the student's DNP project has been completed. In addition, we developed a new course, nursing 700, which now provides an overview of the DNP project before students enroll in their didactic and practicum courses. This was implemented based on direct observation, anecdotal faculty feedback, and student feedback. Formative assessments were also taken into consideration when developing NURS 700. Since the program began in 2017, 12 students have taken NURS 710: Seminar I, 4 students did not meet the 85% benchmark for the DNP written proposal and 2 did not meet the 85% benchmark for the oral proposal defense. This demonstrated a need for improved preparation prior to beginning the first DNP didactic course, NURS 710. NURS 700, Introduction to the DNP Project was created to prepare students for their DNP project early in the program so that their clinical problem can develop throughout their coursework prior to starting NURS 710. With the implementation of NURS 700, we will continue to monitor trends in benchmarks for NURS 710. With the revisions to the curriculum, all the students to meet the DNP Essentials upon graduation, while reducing the credit hours from 35 to 33, making us more competitive with other DNP programs.

From a department standpoint, we have seen a frequent change in leadership with four different chairs in the past six years and three graduate directors. We have continued to hire new DNP faculty and many new instructors to teach in the master's program.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The DNP program received accreditation on October 6, 2021. For five years enrollment in BS-DNP has grown, but overall, not seeing high enrollment in DNP likely due to still offering MS-FNP. We are seeing a lot of alumni of our master's program return for the post-master's DNP. We will continue to explore if the MS-FNP will need to be phased out as NONPF recommending all FNP programs move to DNP by 2025. Faculty and staff are attending conferences (IONL, NONPF, ISAPN, Political Action Day, Nursing Expo) to host a table for program recruitment. Additionally, we partner with Wiley for program recruitment. From a school standpoint, we faculty and staff visit student classes, network with healthcare systems, email alumni, post fliers, and implemented a LinkedIn profile. In addition, we will explore beginning a DNP in Leadership/Education option for prospective students.

Since the start of our DNP program in 2017, we have seen a rise in our enrollment, with five students in 2017 and 52 students in 2021. In 2022, our enrollment was 41, and this is likely due to students changing from the DNP program to our MS-FNP program. Since 2017 we have conferred ten Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degrees. We started the program in 2017, so it's taken several years to see our first degrees conferred. Also, paid advertising was halted in 2020, which likely negatively impacted our enrollment.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

The DNP program began in Fall 2017. After running the program for the past several years, issues were identified, and the curriculum was revised. Examples of the issues included: needing increased flexibility with DNP projects, introducing the DNP project earlier in the curriculum (led to creating NURS 700), and revision of the manuscript templates for the DNP students to provide consistency between the courses. The DNP program was weak in delivery of policy, so an interdisciplinary course PHHE 661 (Health Policy and Law) was added.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

As a result of this review, our short-term goal is to increase enrollment. We would also like to explore offering more DNP tracks for specialization that would appeal to a wider range of applicants (i.e., education and leadership). Other institutions and competitor schools offer specialties along with the DNP degree (for example a DNP in Leadership). This would give students more direction in choosing a DNP and potentially lead to more career opportunities. A DNP in Educational Leadership would prepare the student to work in higher education, educational administration, or a leadership role within an organization.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

Enrollment is moderate in the program with opportunities for growth. The program is strengthening the curriculum to better prepare students for success. A deeper understanding of the

vertical alignment and trajectory of students from undergraduate through doctoral education may help increase enrollment in the program.

PROGRAM: M.S. IN APPLIED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCES

Date of last review: 03/15/2015

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Master of Sciences in Applied Human Development and Family Sciences is designed to prepare professionals who support families and individuals in meeting their basic human needs. This degree also augments advanced graduate work and research as well as college teaching. The AHDFS program includes the study of theories, research, and prevention/intervention/practice, and their interaction across the lifespan of individual development within the context of family and social systems. It is also to provide professional career enhancement for advanced graduate work and research, college teaching, and programing and administration positions in community and government agencies. To further tailor your education we offer two specializations in AHDFS with the option of a Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy, or a Specialization in Leadership in Aging Studies. Whether a student chooses the general AHDFS program, or one our specialization programs, all three of these different tracks can help prepare students for becoming professionals that serve individuals, couples, and families. The specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy (SMFT), was recently re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education for seven more years until November 1, 2029. The SMFT Program emphasizes the practical application of systemic family therapy principles to the diagnosis and treatment of problems in human relationships. Graduates of the program who specialize in Marriage and Family Therapy will meet the first 5 SLOs, but also need to meet the additional SMFT specific SLOs. Both the general AHDFS program and the SMFT have high expectations for achieving strong student learning outcomes, as the faculty work to prepare graduate students for their upcoming career and/or furthering their education at the doctoral level. According to the 2022 Occupational Outlook Handbook, (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics), the predictions for graduates prepared to work in such careers are promising and opportunities for jobs are projected to be plentiful through the year 2031.

One of the recent changes to the AHDFS Program is that there is the new addition of the Specialization in Leadership in Aging Studies. With an increasingly aging population throughout the U.S. and around the world, we believe this will be a very marketable program for years to come. This specialization is intended for those interested in pursuing leadership positions in aging, including long-term care, social services, service management, and research and evaluation. It is also designed to be preparation to sit for the Illinois Nursing Home Administrator's License. The program meets the competencies outlined by the Association of Gerontology in Higher Education. Since 2020 when the Specialization in Leadership in Aging Studies began, we have had 4 graduate students enroll, 1 student graduate, and at least 8 additional students are expected to join in the Fall 2023 Semester. The faculty are continuing to work on curricular changes to this new option

of a Specialization in Leadership in Aging Studies. Another way that we will strengthen this new graduate program is that we will now be offering a 4th emphasis in HDFS called Adult Development and Aging which will begin in the Fall 2023 Semester. This new emphasis will serve as a feeder program for the graduate specialization. We now offer three online graduate certificates in: Family and Child Development, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and Leadership in Aging Services. These online certificates are designed to provide education and training to graduate students from a variety of different disciplines. This past year the faculty worked to improve students' preparation for completing either a master's thesis or to complete the comprehensive exam. This is an important step to improving student learning outcomes in the program. The faculty have also had many discussions about how to fairly assess if students are meeting the expectations for completing a comprehensive exam more effectively. A rubric has been developed to help assess whether students are meeting expectations for acquiring, writing, and synthesizing knowledge about individuals, couples, and families. Discussions among the faculty continue, and different strategies are being considered on how to improve our approach with the comprehensive exam so that it is a meaningful experience, and an accurate assessment of student learning. More graduate students in the past 2-3 years are now passing the comprehensive exams in their first try, and more are making the decision to complete a thesis. There have been talks amongst the faculty about the creation of a portfolio (professional engagement, scholarship, service, etc.) path for our students instead of completing a thesis or the comprehensive exam.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Enrollment for the M.S. in the Applied Development and Family Sciences program between the 2018-2022 academic years steadily climbed and then had a very modest decline with the onset of COVID-19. Between the years 2018 through 2022 there were a total of 62 degrees in the AHDFS graduate programs conferred.

One of the major findings from the current review of our graduate programs is how important it is to find ways to financially support our graduate students. For instance, faculty have been actively pursuing grants that we will provide financial support to students through graduate assistantships. Grants at our Child Development and Family Center have been awarded over the past several years. For instance, the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CAMPIS) Grant has been able to support a GA position to further provide support to our graduate students. Also, the Program Director in the Specialization of Marriage and Family Therapy was recently awarded a grant through SAMHSA to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid Training to 4000 adults in DeKalb, Kane, Winnebago counties. The grant should provide a total of 10 graduate assistantships over 4 years. In addition, the School Chair has provided graduate assistantships additional budgetary funding so that students in some of our large intro HDFS courses will have experiential learning opportunities. Finally, and faculty have become aware of the IDCFS Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education Fellowship which can again help our graduate students financially as they pursue their degree path in one of our AHDFS programs. One of the ways that students can increase their involvement with students and faculty in HDFS is by involvement in the student organization

housed in HDFS. The NIU Student Council on Family Relations (NIUSCFR) is a student affiliate chapter of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). The Illinois Council on Family Relations (ILCFR) is the state-level NCFR organization in Illinois. Although students from all majors are welcome to become involved in the organization, the NIUSCFR is affiliated with the School of FACS and specifically marketed to HDFS majors and AHDFS graduate students. Students in NIUSCFR have opportunities to attend both national and state conferences, discuss family issues and policy concerns, provide service to the community, and to engage in meaningful research activities. by recent NIU AHDFS graduates is presented below:

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

Preparing students for internships, practicum experiences, graduate school and future career opportunities has continued to be a major emphasis and focus for the program. Growing the program has also continued to be our priority, and many marketing strategies continue to be employed to recruit students to both our undergraduate and graduate programs. In the Fall 2021 Semester an accelerated (3+2) master's degree program was passed through curriculum that will also allow high achieving HDFS students in the FRPW emphasis the ability to complete their undergraduate degree, and a master's degree in Applied Human Development and Family Sciences in only 5 years. Since the last review we have made many curricular changes to all the programs top increase enrollment and to strengthen our programs. For instance, the GRE is no longer required for students applying to the program. The GRE was a barrier to many students applying to the program. We have also found ways to streamline the application process for all three programs.

Through the reaccreditation process and as a result of the findings from our last review the following actions and updates have taken place in our Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy: the creation of the required course HDFS 785 – Sex Therapy, SMFT students are now required to take the course HDFS 684 – The Family with Adolescents (which is now scheduled once each year), the course HDFS 693 – Addiction and Substance Abuse in Marriage and Family Therapy is now offered by NIU faculty on campus, students now complete renowned and respected clinical trainings to assist them in their work with couples with Prepare/Enrich and Gottman trainings. Students during their 2nd year in the program now take a practice MFT licensure exam to help prepare them for after graduation. In addition to those recent changes, the SMFT Program Director and faculty have developed a more robust clinic manual. Other actions have taken place since the last review including (1) improvements to our Couple and Family Therapy Clinic, (2) additional clinical training, (3) updates to our comprehensive exam, (4) additional courses students are required to take in the SMFT Program, and (5) creating the curriculum for the Leadership in Aging program. Further, we have focused preparing students for internships, practicum experiences, doctoral programs, and future career opportunities has continued to be a major emphasis and focus for the program. Growing the program has also continued to be our priority, and many marketing strategies continue to be employed to recruit students to our graduate programs.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The faculty have reviewed the student learning outcomes and will continue to refine them in 2023 to further represent our goals for students that graduate from NIU in AHDFS. Faculty have discussed and will continue to explore strategies for facilitating increased enrollment. Having the opportunity to carefully review our current SLOs, most recent status report, and assessment plan is helping to recognize specific ways we can continue to strengthen our graduate program. As a result of this review, we have been carefully thinking about ways in which we can expand and strengthen our graduate program. One of the ways that was identified during the reaccreditation process and through faculty discussions was the need for a full-time clinic director in the Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy. This position would be a great strength to the SMFT students and provide support to the other SMFT faculty. In addition, this position would be able to help with practicum placements and supervision and the day-to-day operations of the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic. This position for an assistant clinical professor and full-time clinic director has been posted and the faculty has begun the search process. Also, to further support our undergraduate and graduate programs a search is currently underway to hire a Clinical Assistant Professor who will teach a variety of our clinical classes in the Family Social Services emphasis as well as other needed courses. We look forward to these potential faculty hires and the ways in which they will help grow our programs in the future.

In the process of this review, it has become increasingly evident that the complexity of the AHDFS programs needs substantial support and strong leadership to continue to grow and strengthen the programs. Something that has emerged through completing this review is the importance of having someone in charge of the graduate programs (director or associate chair). Due to the reallocation of some funds, we are currently in the process of hiring both a program coordinator, and identifying from the faculty someone that can serve in the role of associate chair in the School of Family and Consumer Science to support the mission of AHDFS.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

They have presented a well-rounded and student focused degree plan. The plan has sought information to meet workforce needs and evolved their program to meet these standards and has a plan to continue to improve.

PROGRAM: B.S. IN MEDICAL LAB SCIENCES

Date of last review: 03/15/2015

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The program format is best described as a campus-centered 2+2 model, with students completing two years of pre-professional course work in general education and preparatory courses before applying to the program. During the first (junior) year of the professional phase, students complete

the didactic coursework online synchronously instead of face-to-face as in years past. Completion of this program allows students to become vital health care team members who provide scientific analysis of blood, body fluids and tissues. MLS graduates are competent in performing the full range of clinical laboratory tests in areas such as hematology, clinical chemistry, immunohematology, microbiology, immunology, coagulation, and molecular diagnostics. Employment of clinical laboratory technologists and technicians is projected to grow 11 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations according to the Bureau of Labor Statistic's website.

Changes include a turnover of faculty with specialty in medical microbiology since 2016. A failed search for a microbiology faculty member during COVID in 2020 resulted in hiring part-time instructors to teach our microbiology, mycology, and parasitology courses for 2 years. The former program coordinator for many years was hired for a department chair position and a new coordinator was appointed from within the MLS program in 2018. A visiting professor was hired for two years to teach the courses covered by the former program coordinator. A faculty search resulted in the hiring of a new assistant professor in fall 2020. The program is now fully staffed for each area of specialization in MLS due to hiring a microbiology tenure-track assistant professor who started in January 2023. The MLS program has expanded course enrollment through the offering of an online degree completion program for working MLTs (associate degree level) who want to pursue a BS degree. The MLS program also increased enrollment in didactic courses through a workforce development certificate program for hospital laboratory personnel with a BS in Biology or Chemistry who need MLS courses in order to become certified in the profession. The MLS program faculty and staff are fully engaged with students through lectures and student laboratory activities as well as participation in SteamFest, summer health care camps, and the MLS Club. Recruitment of new students into the major takes place through career fairs, open houses, and other campus activities.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Trends in enrollment: We currently have 60% of the 2018 total number of students, conferred 117 degrees, and have retention rates over 91.4% the past 5 years. Decreased enrollment may stem from many things such as the lack of knowledge of the major to fewer students attending college because of COVID.

The majority of our students are female and most of the students are Caucasian. However, we are seeing more students identifying as male and Hispanic since the last program review. The number of Asian and Black students enrolled in MLS has increased from 6-8% to 19%. The field of MLS in the hospital setting continues to be a diverse community in relation to gender and ethnicity. There is evidence that the degree program is committed to student diversity and making progress in closing equity gaps (where they exist) in student success.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

Many of the program's alumni remain in northern Illinois and several are members of the MLS advisory committee which meets twice a year. Through networking and constant communication with laboratory preceptors for student internships, the program has been the recipient of several used but working pieces of equipment and supplies. These donations continue to enhance the student laboratory experience. Alumni continue to praise their experience with the program to the extent that they recommend the NIU MLS program to high schoolers and in some cases family members.

Though our total number of admitted students in the program is less than what we had between 2013-2018, we have made changes to our MLT-MLS degree completion program to increase that particular group of students and have added a workforce development certificate for laboratory personnel needing certification.

The program has been participating in SteamFest, health career summer camps, STEM Read, etc. for years to help promote the profession. We have hosted the Huntley High School Health Career students and the Somonauk Middle School science class for a few years before COVID.

The faculty and staff visited a chemistry and microbiology course in spring of 2019 to promote the MLS Program. In 2022 the program coordinator visited the Indian Valley Vocation Center in Sandwich and participated in Rockford University's Health Career Camp to promote MLS.

The MLS website lists the employment opportunities and benefits from pursuing a career in MLS. The program coordinator receives multiple emails regarding employment opportunities from recruiters which are then forwarded on to current seniors and alumni.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

A task force of members of the MLS advisory committee met in summer of 2022 to discuss ways the NIU's MLS Program could help enhance uncertified laboratory staff. Because of the workforce shortage, hospitals hired personnel for the laboratory who are not trained MLS, but have a BS in Biology or Chemistry. The task force identified the need for these individuals to learn theory in MLS and prepare for the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification exam. ASCP is a professional society for clinical/medical laboratory personnel and allied health personnel. It is the premier agency providing national examinations to certify those who have completed MLT or MLS education programs. The MLS program has successfully created a workforce development certificate in Microbiology and Core Lab for on-the-job-trained MLS working in the clinical affiliate hospitals with a BS degree. These individuals apply to NIU as post baccalaureates and enroll in the required 300-level MLS courses for the certificate that they are pursuing. The online format enables the working individual to complete the courses. This certificate will enable these professionals to pursue certification via ASCP. Including these clinical affiliate employees in our courses has increased enrollments and potentially may increase admissions to the major.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The program is taking steps to moderate falling enrollment trends through public promotion (e.g., STEM fest, summer camps) and outreach activities (e.g., high schools). A task force was created to identify subpopulations of health workers in need of certification.

PROGRAM: M.S. IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Date of last review: 03/15/2015

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Health Sciences (M.S.) was established to fill a gap in academic offerings for NIU students in Health Sciences and related degrees to progress from A.A.S. to B.S. and ultimately Ph.D. degree. The Health Sciences M.S. also filled a niche in CHHS academic offerings to meet the market demand for working professionals in health and human services who wish to expand their skill sets through graduate study. The Health Sciences M.S. is intended to be delivered through online core coursework. Elective course offerings may be taken through face-to-face, blended, or online courses as the student deems appropriate. Students have the option to fulfill their electives through coursework in a selected content area or Certificate of Graduate Study.

Some common occupations of our graduates include the following: healthcare assistants (e.g. pharmacy technicians, dental assistants, medical assistants, medical records/health information specialists), dietitians/nutritionists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, healthcare field related (e.g. administration, health research, education, etc.). Students and applicants also utilize the degree program to advance in their current careers. As the Health Sciences M.S. is inter/transdisciplinary, employment opportunities for graduates vary broadly across the field of health. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, for general health care assistant positions (e.g. medical assistants), employment is expected to grow 18% from 2020 to 2030, which is much faster than the average for all occupations (8%). Similarly for other healthcare support occupations, the projected change is 16%.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Trends in enrollment have indicated that within the past 5 years (to-date of Fall 2022), there have been 15 students enrolled in the program. Four have graduated from the program. There are currently 5 students that are either inactive, withdrew from the program, or did not register for any courses. As of Fall 22, there are a total of 7 students actively enrolled in the program, with one expected to graduate in Fall 22.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

Over the past few years, we have been intentional in increasing resources available to the degree program. Within the last year (since January 2022), we have added a program coordinator to the

health sciences area. The increased resource has been beneficial to the daily management and operations of the MS program. It is recommended that we continue to increase resources for the sustainability of the program (e.g. new hires to handle capacity of the program). As for improvements to the degree program's curriculum, we have continually focused on the graduate certificate as an option in the program. There are a number of students who have transferred from other programs. We have encouraged students to use current coursework towards graduate certificates. Additionally, to better prepare students for the exam/expectations, we decided to create a "prep" sheet for all MS students enrolled in the program, which we are hoping to assess if it improves the performance and preparation (e.g. better articulation of mission, philosophy, mission, goals, and discussion of artifacts). We would like to continue to monitor the impact of the "prep" sheet.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to enhance professional competency through an assessment of our student's ability to create their own professional development plan. Tenets of the comprehensive exam include a personal vision statement, philosophy, mission, and goals. As a result of our review, it is our hope to assess our comprehensive exam from a program level in the near future upon increased enrollment in the program and more students completing their comprehensive exams to have an adequate sample size. Other actions that will be taken as a result of this review include: (1) a continued focus on marketing/branding as we explore trends in enrollment, (2) continue to make monitor and make revisions as necessary to program's curriculum and instructional modalities, (3) explore additional opportunities with course offerings, (4) explore possible changes to degree program's admission processes, and (5) explore opportunities to increase resources for the sustainability of the program (e.g. new hires to handle capacity of the program).

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

While this program started off slow in enrollment, the larger launch of the program was during the initial phases of the pandemic. However, in the last few years the program is showing growth and evolving to meet the need of the student to be aligned with the industry as US Department of Labor.

PROGRAM: B.S. IN NURSING

Date of last review: 03/15/2015

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The prelicensure baccalaureate nursing program prepares students as baccalaureate nurse generalists in the roles of provider of care, designer/manager/coordinator of care, and member of the profession. The prelicensure program is a face-to-face program. Registered nurse employment

is expected to grow 6% from 2021 to 2031 (Registered Nurses: Occupational Outlook Handbook: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov)). The Registered Nurse profession and nursing education has been greatly impacted by the Pandemic since 2020. A large change to our program, impacting nursing education, was the increased use of simulation and/or virtual reality simulation to increase student clinical time. This specifically, occurred as during the height of the pandemic, many clinical partners reduced the number of students allowed on site, and or, at points would not allow students to gain clinical experience with them. With approval from the Illinois State Boards of Nursing, many clinical hours were replaced with simulation hours through December of 2020. In addition, our NCLEX-RN licensure success rates have dropped since the beginning of the pandemic from 96.3% in 2019 to 95.04% in 2020, 85.6% in 2021, and 75.4% for 2022. While this drop is not unique to our nursing program as nationwide, similar programs have fallen from 91.22% in 2019 to 86.06% in 2021, it is indicative that the current curriculum needs attention. While we attribute some of the reduced pass rates to the pandemic-related changes, including the temporary shift laboratory-based simulation, we have improved our simulation experience and, beginning spring 2021, moved back to pre-pandemic amounts and types of face to face clinical experience. Moreover, in Fall of 2022 the school provided a free three-day onsite NCLEX review course through Elsevier to all recent grads and many alumni who had not passed the exam. The short-term plan is to continue to assess the need to offer this review course to future graduates.

Additionally, in the last year the undergraduate nursing program was reduced from 64 to 60 credits. Three stand-alone courses, Nursing Informatics (1 credit), Genetics and Human Genomics for Nurses (1 credit), and Gerontological Nursing (2 credits) were removed from the curriculum and instead the content integrated into other courses. In addition, in response to student and clinical faculty feedback, pharmacology was moved from the third semester to the second semester to ensure students had pharmacology content earlier in the curriculum. Lastly, beginning Spring 2023, the RN to BS Practicum course, NURS 463 Practicum in Leadership and Population-Focused Nursing, will be taught in two separate courses, NURS 492 Practicum in Leadership and Population-Focused Nursing I and NURS 493 Practicum in Leadership and Population-Focused Nursing II. This revised format will provide the students with 16 weeks, rather than 8 weeks to develop and implement their projects and improve program-related outcomes. With faculty guidance, students will assess their chosen organization and identify a problem in NURS 492 and then work on a project in NURS 493 to address the identified problem and implement and evaluate a solution.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In 2021 the undergraduate nursing program received accreditation by The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) extending accreditation through the year 2031. This accreditation identifies programs that engage in effective educational practices. In an effort to address our decreasing NCLEX-RN pass rates in the prelicensure option, we have implemented a few changes, with the intention of evaluating their effect prior to implementing more. In Fall 2022 we implemented a program called NovEx into our NURS 431 Transition to Professional Nursing

course. NovEx is an evidence-based practice program developed in response to the pandemic to develop clinical thinking and reasoning, improve recognition of patient problems, and identify relevant patient findings. We serve a diverse student population and strive to create a community of belonging. In the fall of 2022, we implemented our Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement which is “Diverse as we are, we are one School of Nursing committed to creating an anti-racist, inclusive, and safe learning environment by speaking up and taking action.” This statement was developed with both faculty and student input. Due to the changing student population, prior to the Fall of 2022 semester start we changed the format of our orientation program “Program Overview” for incoming students to include a full day “Jump Start.” During Jump Start students are provided tools and resources for use during the first semester, which can be a challenging semester for any student. Incorporated into this day are several ice breaker type activities as well to increase students comfort level with faculty as well as each other. One of the goals of Jump Start was to engage the students early on and encourage a sense of community and fellowship amongst the students so that they can find support amongst their cohort in addition to the tools and resources we provide them. In addition, we changed our Dismissal policy to provide students with an opportunity to remain in the program on an Academic Warning.

In our RN to BS program NURS 463 Practicum in Leadership and Population-Focused Nursing required students to complete a significant amount of pre-course preparation, sometimes as far as 7 months in advance of them beginning the course. Many of the RN’s taking NURS 463 have given feedback that they are spending time and money just to meet requirements that are above and beyond what is needed by the site they are employed at and completing a project for. The process of uploading clinical requirements into Castle Branch is a large dissatisfier for RN to BS students since many are already working at a healthcare facility and have met all the qualifications for immunizations required by their employer. In addition to our standard degree-completion option, we launched a concurrent-enrollment, also known as dual-enrollment, option for students who are just beginning an associate nursing program. In this option students will take full time ADN courses along with 1 or 2 online NIU courses in the RN-B.S. option. These dual students have not yet taken the NCLEX-RN licensure exam and do not have any experience and often no connections with working nurses. This puts them at a disadvantage when trying to identify a preceptor or a problem at a healthcare facility for their quality improvement (QI) project. Additionally, the standard RN-B.S. students routinely provided anecdotal feedback that 8 weeks to complete a QI project was not enough time. In light of these factors, the course was changed from NURS 463, 1 8-week course, to NURS 492 and NURS 493, providing the students with 1 course to identify a facility, preceptor and a problem and the second course to develop, implement and evaluate a solution. Due to the revised format of the Practicum students are no longer required to submit/maintain clinical requirements unless required by the agency MOU they would visit to complete practicum activities as required. Students now have the opportunity to complete the direct care practicum quality improvement project from a distance/virtually with support and guidance of a project mentor.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

Several actions have been taken as a result of the changes in the Baccalaureate Essentials. First of all, in response to the increasing diversity of our student body, and the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Essential we changed the format of our Program Overview to a two-part overview with the second day occurring the week before the first day of classes. We call it Jump Start. During Jump Start students spend an entire day at the school not only learning about the tools and resources available to them, but also learning about self-care related to nutrition, sleep, etc. In response to the upcoming change in format of the NCLEX-RN licensure exam we also began to incorporate NextGen questions into every core nursing course exam in order to prepare students.

The RN to BS practicum course, NURS 463, is an 8-week course in which students are expected to identify a problem within an agency and then plan and implement a QI project to address the problem. Three factors lead to splitting 463 into two new courses; 1) lack of time to complete a project, 2) unnecessary student financial burden to complete clinical requirements not required by the site, and 3) lack of access to a health care facility for dual enrollment students and students not currently employed. Starting in Spring 2023, the practicum will be split into two 8-week courses with the first 8-weeks (NURS 492) focusing on the assessment of the problem and planning a solution. The second half of the semester, students will spend 8-weeks in NURS 493 implementing and evaluating their QI project.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

In the undergraduate program faculty have been preparing for the new Baccalaureate Essentials as well as the new NCLEX-RN NextGen testing format. An Ad Hoc Nursing committee of undergraduate faculty members was developed to begin the process of mapping our curriculum to the new Baccalaureate Essentials so that gaps can be identified. Another Ad Hoc Nursing committee of undergraduate faculty-focused members are working on methods to prepare our students for the new NCLEX-RN NextGen testing format. All core nursing courses have integrated NextGen questions into all exams.

Careful planning and course development has been underway since the beginning of 2022 to create two new practicum courses (492 & 493 to replace 463). Faculty who have years of experience working with RN to BS students developing practicum projects worked in collaboration with the Curriculum and Evaluation Committee to create new syllabi, course Student Learning Outcomes and assignments. All student plans of study were assessed to ensure this change did not prolong/extend their graduation. Those who were impacted were given the opportunity to take either NURS 463 in its current format or switch to the new 2-course design.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The program is taking steps to moderate falling pass rates on the licensure exams through additional coursework. The curriculum is better aligned to support students for clinical engagement. Ad Hoc committees are mapping the curriculum to core competencies and preparing students for a new testing format for the licensure exams.

PROGRAM: B.S. IN SPORT MANAGEMENT

Date of last review: 03/15/2022

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The BS in Sport Management program began in Fall 2019. This is a predominantly in-person program, with a culminating, 300-hour internship requirement (LESM 486) at the end of the program. The program also allows students to complete fieldwork in this area for elective credits (i.e., in the form of LESM 385), which incentivizes students to gain industry experience above and beyond the culminating internship.

The BS in Sport Management prepares graduates for various sport industry careers areas such as athletic and sport clubs, and intercollegiate athletics, professional and amateur sports, sport marketing agencies, equipment merchandising, and sport consulting.

Overall employment in sports occupations is projected to grow 13% from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all occupations; this increase is expected to result in about 95,500 new jobs over the decade. In addition to new jobs from growth, opportunities arise from the need to replace workers who leave their occupations permanently. About 106,200 openings each year, on average, are projected to come from growth and replacement needs.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since its launch in Fall 2019, program enrollments have seen a impressive and significant growth (i.e., Fa19 = 66 to Fa22 = 181). Given the increase in enrollments, the number of degrees conferred since has more than doubled (and should continue to rise) - i.e., 2021 = 17; 2022 = 36). The program continues to serve a diverse community of students with enrollment and success rates for Black, Latinx, and students who identify as female on the rise. The department continues to serve these students with many hands-on experiences. For example, the department offers excellent applied experiences to undergraduate students in the program (imersion field trips, study abroad experiences, etc.). Students also have an opportunity to earn up to nine undergraduate credit hours of coursework through field experiences (LESM 385) when working with our partner sport industry organizations. Since Fall 2020, the sport management program has hired four new TT faculty member in order to sucessfully deliver these programs - which has enhanced the diversisty of our program faculty (i.e., 2 international, 1 Black, 1 Middle Eastern faculty members).

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

We have developed partnerships with industry professionals and organizations (such as: Northern Illinois University Athletics, Chicago Fire, Chicago Red Stars, Paragon Sport Marketing, 160over90 Cultural Sport and Entertainment Agency, Milwaukee Bucks, Intersport Sport Media and Marketing Agency, Sycamore (IL) Park District, Waubensee Community College, Hinsdale (IL) Racquet Club, Kane County Cougars, Chicago Dogs, Northwestern Medicine, Advocate Healthcare, Chicago Cubs, and Chicago/Windy City Bulls) for guest speaking, teaching, and experiential learning opportunities - offered field experience opportunities for additional course credit (LESM 385) to incentivize the importance of gaining professional experience in the sports industry.

A diverse, transdisciplinary curriculum and opportunities to pursue stackable credentials continue to be one of the hallmarks of our sport management program. Students can now pursue seven different minors specific to their plan of study within the department (e.g., Sport Sales, Sport Journalism, Esports Management, Sport for Development and Social Change, Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Activity, Coaching, and Sport Analytics).

Also, KNPE, in all three of their undergraduate program areas (Kinesiology, Physical Education, and Sport Management) have codified four new 2+2 partnerships with local community colleges (e.g., Rock Valley, Kishwaukee, Waubensee, and City College of Chicago).

Additionally, KNPE held their first annual career fair specific to our major programs (at the grad / undergrad levels). Partner organizations who attended (n = 60) rated this experience as extremely positive (4.83 / 5.00). Moreover, approximately 20 students obtained field experience, internship, or interview opportunities as a result of this endeavor. Finally, program faculty have worked to develop an interactive “alumni map” to afford current students the opportunity to connect with our program’s alums and enhance their sense of belonging and connectedness.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The program is planning to add an additional transdisciplinary specializations / minors in partnership with our industry partnerships. The program aims to enhance recruitment of underrepresented students, especially BIPOC students. The program plans to increase residency opportunities for students, including a week-long immersion experience within the Chicago sports industry during the summer for students; as well as continue the career fair. Additionally, to foster our students’ sense of belonging and to better connect them with our programs and faculty (specifically during their first year of study), we are developing a 1-credit, 100-level orientation to the major course for our first-year students.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

Enrollments continue to grow.

PROGRAM: PH.D. IN KINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Date of last review: 03/23/2023

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The Ph.D. program in kinesiology and physical education prepares students for faculty positions that comprise teaching, research, service, and leadership in a specific area of specialization. The program is purposefully small in nature and faculty members are limited to chairing two doctoral students concurrently. This affords a number of high-level touch points and significant mentoring that is at time unseen in similar doctoral programs. We aim to prepare our graduates for employment in an academic setting by focus on all three pillars of the academy - research, teaching, and service.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since Fall 2019, program enrollments have a very solid increase (i.e., Fa19 = 1 to Fa22 = 4). The first Ph.D. was awarded in August 2022. Student demographics are very diverse: 1 Black female, 2 White females, and 1 international male. All four students are fully funded through either graduate teaching assistantships (n = 3) or Graduate school funded fellowships (n = 1 Woodson fellowship). Our PhD students are very productive in their respective areas of research and outreach. For example during AY23, these four students were co-authors on six (6) peer-reviewed publications, participated in nine (9) research presentations, and presently have multiple manuscripts in preparation at various stages. In addition to their research pursuits, they are also very active in service to either the university or to the profession. For example, students have served on GSAC at NIU and led efforts within our various research groups (e.g., FLEX, HERG, and HEALS).

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

We will continue to work to recruit doctoral students into our graduate program. We have developed recruitment plans to optimize our visibility at academic conference and through our social media platforms.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The program plans to focus on authentic experiential learning and research opportunities, laboratory upgrades and enhanced equipment. The program plans to develop more industry partnerships, scholarships and mentoring programs for students.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

PhD program continues to grow, but in a cost neutral way.

PROGRAM: M.S. IN KINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Date of last review: 03/23/2020

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

During AY21, the MS in KNPE program reduced the credit hours requirements from 36 to 30 hours. This was done in order to better align competitively with the requirements of other peer programs whose degree requirements generally sit between 30 and 33 credit hours. Additionally, the program converted from an MSED to an MS to better align with current industry standards.

The MS in Kinesiology and Physical Education offers three specializations: exercise physiology, physical education pedagogy, or sport and exercise psychology. The specialization in exercise physiology will prepare students for various roles related to exercise physiology: research, teaching, and applied/practical/laboratory positions in hospitals, corporations, and health clubs. The specialization in physical education pedagogy will prepare students to assume leadership roles in pedagogy and curriculum development in physical education and related fields. The specialization in sport and exercise psychology will prepare students for addressing the psychological needs of their athletes in a performance and mental setting.

Exercise Physiology: Employment of exercise physiologists is projected to grow 9% percent from 2021 to 2031, faster than the average for all occupations. About 1,700 openings for exercise physiologists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Physical Education: Employment of high school teachers is projected to grow 5% from 2021 to 2031, about as fast as the average for all occupations. About 77,900 openings for high school teachers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Additionally, there is a large teacher shortage in the State of Illinois (which will add to the demand here).

Sport and Exercise Psychology: Demand for psychologists — which includes sports psychologists — is expected to grow by 14% between 2016 and 2026, a growth in the job market by an additional 23,000 positions during that period.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since Fall 2019, program enrollments have a very solid increase (i.e., Fa19 = 66 to Fa22 = 80). The number of degrees conferred since 2018 has increased steadily (i.e., 2018 = 22; 2022 = 31). 100% of students were employed within a sport-related field in AY19 and AY21. It was recommended that the program provide new applied learning experiences, certifications (partnership with Counseling), and enhanced laboratory experiences.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

During AY21, the MS in KNPE program reduced the credit hours requirements from 36 to 30 hours. The program added certificates of graduate study (CGS) opportunities to supplement the

primary degree program, enhanced department-specific graduate student travel funds to complement travel funding provided by the Graduate School. Classroom and laboratory enhancements have occurred in the program's teaching spaces (e.g., new desks, new A/V through HD projectors, BEN-Q, etc, conference meeting room).

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

The faculty have developed new coursework which align with current industry standards. Three new CGS offerings have been vetted and approved through the curricular process for a Fall 2023 launch which will add additional stackable credentials to the MS program. These opportunities include CGS options in: College Athletics Administration, Sport Coaching and Leadership, and Sport Sales and Sponsorships. The program is in the planning stage to afford students earning baccalaureate degrees from HBCUs / HSIs a seamless transition and resources for matriculation to our MS program (i.e., HBCU Connect).

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

Enrollments are solid and increasing. SLOs are sound and appropriate.

PROGRAM: M.S. IN SPORT MANAGEMENT

Date of last review: 03/23/2020

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

During AY21, the MS in Sport Management (SM) program reduced the credit hours requirements from 36 to 30 hours. This was done in order to better align competitively with the requirements of other peer programs whose degree requirements generally sit between 30 and 33 credit hours.

To better align with growing needs of our students to gain practical experience (many of which are integral parts of various units on campus - e.g., NIU athletics, recreation, etc.; and other external partners - e.g., professional sport organizations / agencies in the area), the MS in SM has begun converted over half of their programming efforts to an online modality. This has afforded students the additional opportunity to seek more full-time practical / authentic learning experiences. Additionally, these opportunities have the potential to be pursued at a much further distance from NIU's campus.

The MS in Sport Management prepares graduates for various sport industry careers areas such as athletic and sport clubs, and intercollegiate athletics, professional and amateur sports, sport marketing agencies, equipment merchandising, and sport consulting.

Overall employment in sports occupations is projected to grow 13% from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all occupations; this increase is expected to result in about 95,500 new jobs over the decade. In addition to new jobs from growth, opportunities arise from the need to

replace workers who leave their occupations permanently. About 106,200 openings each year, on average, are projected to come from growth and replacement needs.

The MS in SM program has seen some declines in enrollment over the past 3-5 years. The primary reason associated with this has been the successful launch of an undergraduate (BS) program in sport management in KNPE (which has caused demand for this program to decrease). As a result, program faculty have been working diligently to rebrand / make significant program updates to better differentiate itself from the BS program and provide more specialized options for potential graduate students. These updates will be provided later in the report.

Full-time, TT faculty associated with this program has increased from two (2) in 2016 to six (6) in 2022. While significant courseloads with these new hires have been associated with the BS program, this has also allowed the MS program to offer a more specialized set of course offerings (see later in the report).

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since Fall 2018, program enrollments have unfortunately seen a steady decline (i.e., Fa18 = 49 to Fa22 = 29). As previously mentioned, the MS in SM program has been viewed as “collateral damage” created by the launch of the BS in SM program. See following sections for ways the program is trying to rectify these declines. Despite decreasing enrollments, the number of degrees conferred since 2018 has remained relative consistent (i.e., 2018 = 31; 2022 = 28). This can be attributed to moving the degree requirements from 36 to 30 credits hours, which affords students the opportunity to complete their degree in approximately 12-18 months (as opposed to 24 months previously).

Retention rates continue to be a strong asset to the MS in SM program. They have remained consistently high at 100% since Fall 2018.

The program continues to serve a diverse community of students with enrollment and success rates for Black, Latinx, and students who identify as female on the rise. The department continues to serve these students with many hands-on experiences. For example, the department offers excellent applied experiences to undergraduate students in the program (immersion field trips, study abroad experiences, etc.). Students also have an opportunity to earn graduate credit through field experiences (LESM 552) when working with our partner sport industry organizations. Since Fall 2020, the sport management program has hired four new TT faculty member in order to successfully deliver these programs - which has enhanced the diversity of our program faculty (i.e., 2 international, 1 Black, 1 Middle Eastern faculty members).

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

During AY21, the MS in Sport Management (SM) program reduced the credit hours requirements from 36 to 30 hours. Development of an Accelerated BS/MS in Sport Management program (3 + 2 program). Auto-admissions and waiver of graduate application fee for students graduating from NIU Honors College.

Three new CGS offerings have been vetted and approved through the curricular process for a Fall 2023 launch which will add additional stackable credentials to the MS in sport management program. These opportunities include CGS options in: College Athletics Administration, Sport Coaching and Leadership, and Sport Sales and Sponsorships - all of which are areas of high demand within the industry.

We have developed partnerships with industry professionals and organizations (such as: Northern Illinois University Athletics, Chicago Fire, Chicago Red Stars, Paragon Sport Marketing, 160over90 Cultural Sport and Entertainment Agency, Milwaukee Bucks, Intersport Sport Media and Marketing Agency, Sycamore (IL) Park District, Waubensee Community College, Hinsdale (IL) Racquet Club, Kane County Cougars, Chicago Dogs, Northwestern Medicine, Advocate Healthcare, Chicago Cubs, and Chicago/Windy City Bulls) for guest speaking, teaching, and experiential learning opportunities.

Additionally, KNPE held their first annual career fair specific to our major programs (at the grad / undergrad levels). Partner organizations who attended (n = 60) rated this experience as extremely positive (4.83 / 5.00). Moreover, approximately 20 students obtained field experience, internship, or interview opportunities as a result of this endeavor. Finally, program faculty have worked to develop an interactive “alumni map” to afford current students the opportunity to connect with our program’s alums and enhance their sense of belonging and connectedness.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

Instructional Modality: fully online program of study, which would allow a greater reach of students locally and internationally. Provide working sport industry professionals who do not hold a post-baccalaureate degree the opportunity to earn graduate credits for previous work experiences (through LESM 509 - Prior Learning Experiences Portfolio). **Additional Specializations:** three new CGS offerings have been vetted and approved through the curricular process for a Fall 2023 launch which will add additional stackable credentials to the MS in SM program. These opportunities include CGS options in: College Athletics Administration, Sport Coaching and Leadership, and Sport Sales and Sponsorships. **Enhanced Recruitment for Students of Color:** Program in the planning stage to afford students earning baccalaureate degrees from HBCUs / HSIs a seamless transition and resources for matriculation to our MS in SM program (i.e., HBCU Connect)

Residency opportunities for students: week-long immersion experience within the Chicago sports industry during the summer for students

Specific short and long-term priorities for the degree program’s operations that are planned and how these align with the short and long-term priorities of the college. The College of Education recently rolled out an updated strategic action planning framework (SAPF) in January 2023. The following will provide examples that align with the SAPF for the MS in SM.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

Despite decreasing enrollments, the MS in sport management is considering a new modality, which would better align with prospective student needs. Also, we are looking into a new demographic (current sport industry professionals), who will be able to earn credit for past working experiences (through LESM 509).

PROGRAM: B.S.ED. IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Date of last review: 03/23/2022

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

The BSEd in Physical Education aligns with the licensure requirements / standards as determined by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Program requirements change at their discretion. Additionally, as a result of the pandemic, certain requirements for this degree have been waived (e.g., EdTPA); however, it will be implemented in the coming months. Currently, the BSEd in Physical Education is undergoing accreditation review and is collating data to submit to CAEP via Specialized Professional Associations (SPA) report.

The BSEd in Physical Education is designed to prepare educator licensure candidates to teach physical education in grades kindergarten through 12th grade (PE K-12). Additionally, students within this program often seek secondary endorsements in a wide variety of areas such as: health education, history, etc. Within KNPE, students also often seek our minor in coaching which provide an additional credential and complements their degree and marketability.

Projected job growth for physical education teachers is 11% from 2018-2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. In addition to new jobs from growth, opportunities arise from the need to replace workers who leave their occupations permanently. There are 109,956 active physical education teacher job openings in the US based on job postings. More importantly, there is a large teacher shortage in the state of Illinois. According to a recent survey conducted by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of School, 93% of Illinois school districts expect an ongoing teacher shortage problem in the 2023 and 2024 academic years.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Program enrollments have been steady since Fall 2019 - ranging from 110 - 124. Given the increase in enrollments, the number of degrees conferred since has more than doubled (and should continue to rise given the current teacher shortage in the state) - i.e., 2019 = 14; 2022 = 29).

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW:

Also, KNPE, in all three of their undergraduate program areas (Kinesiology, Physical Education, and Sport Management) have codified four new 2+2 partnerships with local ocommunity colleges (e.g., Rock Valley, Kishwaukee, Waubensee, and City College of Chicago). Additionally, KNPE held their first annual career fair specific to our major programs (at the grad / undergrad levels).

Partner organizations who attended (n = 60) rated this experience as extremely positive (4.83 / 5.00). Moreover, approximately 20 students obtained field experience, internship, or interview opportunities as a result of this endeavor.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW:

Program plans to enhance enhanced recruitment for Students of Color, to optimize enrollments and offer more experiential learning opportunities. The program is planning to add an additional transdisciplinary specializations / minors in partnership with our district partnerships. The program aims to enhance recruitment of underrepresented students, especially BIPOC students. Additionally, to foster our students' sense of belonging and to better connect them with our programs and faculty (specifically during their first year of study), we are developing a 1-credit, 100-level orientation to the major course for our first-year students.

DECISION:

Degree program is in good standing, and will seek recognition by CAEP.

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

Program is in good standing.

CENTER: CENTER FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM.

The scholarly output of the Center is remarkable as demonstrated by grant activity and the number of publications, awards, and presentations. The Center also generated four patents, notable for a non-technical field. Faculty and staff affiliates demonstrated greater disciplinary depth and organizational breadth than at any time in the past. This program is unique in that it welcomes so many different areas and research foci. This breadth is a strength. The Center deliberately invested in strengthening interdisciplinary collaborations and faculty mentoring with a regular series of programs and events. Faculty participation has been stable while student engagement increased during the pandemic. These positive outcomes have been produced with very little university budgetary investment or university funding. There is significant investment of time and effort by the affiliates. The diversity of the Center reflects the ethnicity and gender composition of the University.

Since the last review, the Center successfully overcame two challenges. In 2018, the Director resigned, the discontinuity in leadership effectively resulted in only six months of operations for that year. Additionally, like many units across the university, COVID-19 required the Center to rethink research and scholarly efforts and maintenance of connections between students, faculty, and staff.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CURRENT REVIEW.

Although the Center is highly successful, the Committee offers several considerations for continued success:

- Strengthen strategic planning by bringing affiliates together on a regular basis to maintain a 3 to 5 year grant and research plan. The plan should meet the needs of a diverse group of researchers, leverage the SIGS, target funding agencies, and build networks with other stakeholders.
- Proceed with the proposed co-Director model after consultation with the VP of RIPS.
- Consider establishing an advisory committee to guide activities.
- Specify measurable objectives and goals to connect with the collected data to demonstrate the achievement of established goals and objectives.
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data on an annual basis. If possible, identify work that was a direct result of the group as opposed to work that affiliates have done that is not aligned to CISLL.
- Benchmark the Center to peer-type and aspirational Centers. For example, Title VI Language Resource Centers could be utilized for benchmarking.
- Direct research efforts toward two or three areas for which the Center can be or is known. The vision might also include longer term funding plans, i.e., multi-year grants that can help support Center activities.
- Increase interactions across colleges in a “meet and greet” or a “Center open house” where CISLL faculty affiliates can interact with faculty/staff who might be interested in interacting with the Center.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW.

In response to her imminent departure as Director, two co-Directors will be appointed. The co-Directors have served on the Executive Board for the Center which will ensure continuity. The Center’s mission was adjusted to respond to emerging societal and research-related themes as identified by its members and to ensure alignment with NIU’s mission.

DECISION

THE PROGRAM IS IN GOOD STANDING.

EXPLANATION FOR THE DECISION:

The review committee concludes CISLL is productive, facilitates faculty scholarship, and has a strong and well-earned reputation. Accordingly, the committee recommends continuation of the Center and looks forward to the response to the recommendations at the next review.

CENTER: NORTHERN ILLINOIS CENTER FOR ACCELERATOR AND DETECTOR DEVELOPMENT (NICADD)

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM

THE CENTER:

- Has both a national and an international reputation. NICADD faculty, research scientists, and students engage/collaborate with CERN, Fermilab, Argonne National Laboratory, Thomas Jefferson National Laboratory, and Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY).
- Has contributed to research on a number of experiments including ATLAS, CMS, DUNE, Mu2e and Muon g-2 experiments.
- Faculty have received awards such as the Early Career Research Program from the Department of Energy, and students have received awards such as the Science Graduate Student Research program award and NICADD Thesis Awards and Undergraduate Research Awards.
- Is highly productive with respect to external funding and publications.
- Has contributed to the areas of accelerator and beam physics, particle physics, and medical physics. More recently, there have been broader, multidisciplinary collaborations with faculty from engineering departments as well as the Department of Computer Science.
- Affiliates provide outreach and engagement opportunities at the secondary education level, both with students and teachers (e.g., QuarkNet Summer Institute, STEMFest, and STEM Cafes).

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CURRENT REVIEW.

While the Center is highly successful, the Committee offers several considerations for continued success:

- Strengthen strategic planning by bringing affiliates together regularly to maintain a 3-to-5-year grant and research plan. Planning should include development of a mission and vision aligned with the University mission and vision, including transdisciplinary research activities.
- At present NICADD appears to be a subunit of the Department of Physics, as opposed to a multidisciplinary university research center. Consider establishing a more separate and independent unit by strengthening and expanding interdisciplinary members outside of physics. This may require discussions with Colleges and RIPS.
- Review and develop Center governance and director/co-director succession planning.
- In collaboration with the Graduate School, continue to develop plans to attract diverse students.
- In collaboration with the Graduate School, resolve issues associated with stipends.
- Undertake benchmarking efforts relative to other NICADD-type centers/units nationally (or even internationally if appropriate).

- Develop a stronger web presence with respect to recruiting efforts (students, postdocs). Targeted fellowships/postdocs might also be marketed in this way.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST REVIEW

In response to the prior assessment, the Center developed protocols to utilize overhead funds from grants to meet research needs such as bridge money for students and postdocs.

DECISION:

The program is in good standing.

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

The review committee concludes NICADD is productive, facilitates faculty scholarship, and has a strong and well-earned reputation. Accordingly, the committee recommends the continuation of the Center and looks forward to the response to the recommendations at the next review.

CLINIC: COUPLE AND FAMILY THERAPY CLINIC

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM:

Since the last program review, this supplemental unit name changed from The Family Therapy Clinic to The Couple and Family Therapy Clinic. Previously, the clinic director was Supportive Professional Staff. Currently, the position of clinic director is a Clinical Assistant Professor position. There were two clinic directors since the last program review. The last clinic director resigned May 2022. We currently have an open position for a clinical assistant professor/Couple and Family Therapy Clinic Director due to the amount of work required to operate and manage the CFTC and to increase the number of students in the Specialization in Marriage Family Therapy (SMFT) program. SMFT faculty revise and update the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic manual annually.

Over the last 15 months, the COVID-19 pandemic created a new set of serious challenges significantly impacting three cohorts. In addition, the academic, clinical, and supervisory changes necessary for the program to continue to provide education, training, clinical service have been the major focus of time and energy from March 1, 2020, to the present. CHHS Information Technology department and the SMFT faculty responded and very effectively to the crisis by rapidly installing secure technology along with policies and procedures for online therapy and supervision. A new video capture technology was added to the CFTC. The CFTC continues to provide virtual therapy in conjunction with in-person therapy. In addition, students have add space to complete their clinical notes, revise treatment plans and case conceptualizations, and review clinical sessions.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the last three years, 8,565 hours of therapy was provided to individuals, couples, and families by the CFTC. On average, the 2019 graduating students each provided 532 clinical hours, 634.5

clinical hours were provided from each of the 2020 graduating students, and 555 clinical hours were provided from each of the 2021 graduating students. The CFTC has successfully incorporated teletherapy as a modality, expanding the services to residents throughout Illinois. The CFTC successfully transitioned to using Titanium for the electronic health records. Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy students continue to provide quality therapy to clients through the CFTC. Faculty and off-site supervisors have provided on average 158.5 hours of supervision to SMFT students. The SMFT program and the CFTC continue to be a resource to the university and the surrounding communities. We have had a waitlist of clients requesting services at the CFTC since 2020. Based on the waitlist, students in the SMFT program will not have difficulty accruing the necessary clinical hours they need to graduate. The waitlist can indicate that the community sees the CFTC as a valuable resource.

The CFTC also provides services to a diverse clientele, while providing SMFT students the opportunity to work with clients from various backgrounds.

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW

The School of Family and Consumer Sciences allocated funds for improvement for the CFTC. The SMFT faculty and students have decided to use funds to improve our play therapy room, improve therapy office, and purchase psychoeducational material for clinical use.

DECISION

The program is in good standing.

EXPLANATION FOR DECISION:

In the last three years, 8,565 hours of therapy was provided to individuals, couples, and families by the CFTC. On average, the 2019 graduating students each provided 532 clinical hours, 634.5 clinical hours were provided from each of the 2020 graduating students, and 555 clinical hours were provided from each of the 2021 graduating students. The CFTC has successfully incorporated teletherapy as a modality, expanding the services to residents throughout Illinois. The CFTC successfully transitioned to using Titanium for the electronic health records. Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy students continue to provide quality therapy to clients through the CFTC. Faculty and off-site supervisors have provided on average 158.5 hours of supervision to SMFT students. The SMFT program and the CFTC continue to be a resource to the university and the surrounding communities. We have had a waitlist of clients requesting services at the CFTC since 2020. Based on the waitlist, students in the SMFT program will not have difficulty accruing the necessary clinical hours they need to graduate. The waitlist can indicate that the community sees the CFTC as a valuable resource.

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