



To: Shannon Waller, Pharmacy Technician program director

From: APR response team

Re: Academic Program Review

Volunteering to go through the Academic Program Review process immediately after completing your first accreditation visit was both courageous and ambitious, reflecting the head-on approach that you take to all aspects of your program. The introductory section of your report, where you distinguished between short, mid, and long-term goals, was particularly noteworthy. This section also includes an established plan for achieving the goals, and this approach will be recommended to programs doing APR in the future.

One distinctive feature of the Pharmacy Technician Program is the high portion of the coursework done online so many students from outside the region or those with scheduling challenges can enroll in the program. The online curriculum is carefully crafted so that Pharmacy Technician online courses have an 86% success rate compared to a COCC overall success rate for online classes of 69%. Although all students must come to the Bend campus for the lab hours, and to practice the techniques and manipulations needed for the career, these hours are scheduled in a way to minimize the impact on students who live outside of Bend. As program director, you also strive to provide flexibility in locating practicum sites in areas outside the region, and many students in your program end up employed at the site of their practicum.

The Pharmacy Technician Program has an exemplary assessment process in place, at both the course level and the program level. Your advisory board helped revise the program level outcomes, ensuring that graduates of the program are truly prepared to be successful in their chosen career. A large proportion of graduates pass the national exam on their first attempt (86%), and the way that you use the domain results from this exam to improve curriculum is a great example of "closing the loop". In response to suggestions by your accreditors, you performed a major curriculum overhaul this year, decreasing the number of required classes and increasing the hours of hands-on learning. You also adjusted the appearance of the classroom so that it more closely resembles a true pharmacy.

The biggest challenge facing the Pharmacy Technician program at this time is low enrollment. This decline is the result of changes in the licensing requirements for Pharmacy Technicians so that a certificate is no longer required, as well as the end of a grant that provided incentives for students at other community colleges to enroll in the COCC program. Many local pharmacies now train their own employees, lowering enrollment numbers, and completion rates are reduced since some students complete their Pharmacy Technician courses and get a job without completing the other certificate requirements. In response to declining enrollment, you have dramatically increased your marketing efforts. You created several short videos, a radio spot, and helped organize the Health Careers Expo that brought many high school students onto campus and exposed them to your program as well as other possible health careers. Initial enrollment numbers for Fall 2017 indicate that these marketing efforts have paid off and that enrollment is increasing.

As part of the Academic Program Review process, you were asked to define program goals for the next five years, and to identify areas where additional support could help you to reach these goals. Please see below for a response to each of these goals and requests:

Goals:

Change required courses to prerequisites – The 2017-18 catalog reflects these changes. BI 231-233 are no longer required, and the Math and WR requirements are shown as pre-requisites.

Add adjunct or full-time faculty member – Adjunct positions are allocated based on a department's need to provide adequate instructors for courses. If your program is struggling to find qualified faculty members to cover all sections of your courses and a single individual is need to teach more than 24 load units in a year, work with your Department Chair to submit a request to FIAT and the President.

Increase equipment (compounding, pharmacy automation, bar coding system...) – Some equipment (shelving, adjustable tables, narcotic storage, compounding equipment...) has already been purchased.

Increase enrollment – This should continue to be a top priority for the coming year. Enrollment in Fall 2017 is higher than in 2016, but it still needs to increase for the program to become stable. For the Pharmacy Technician program to be healthy it should have stable enrollment near the capacity of the courses (16 students).

Increase number of clinical sites – The report states that you are in the process of developing new sites. This will become a higher priority as the number of students in the program increases.

Collaborate with nursing on simulation labs – This type of collaboration has the potential to positively impact both Pharmacy and Nursing students.

Begin continuous program entry instead of only in Fall term – This will become a priority only if enrollment in the program is high enough to warrant offering more than one section of a course in a year. While some students may choose not to enroll in the program because it only starts in the Fall term, this loss must be balanced with the need to maintain a certain level of enrollment in all sections of a class. Offering the class twice a year will not make sense if only a few extra students are added to the program. Work with your Department Chair and Dean to determine when enrollment warrants an increased level of offerings.

>75% pass rate on PTCE (Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam) – You have already exceeded this goal. Keep up the good work.

Develop program in IV and compounding certification – This is listed as a long term goal in your report and should not distract you from the primary goal of attaining stable enrollment in the existing program. At this time you may want to research the demand for employees with these specialized skills and to determine what level of coursework is needed to meet local demand, before beginning to create a new certificate option.

Requests for increased support:

Increased marketing and recruitment resources – You have made major efforts to reach out to potential students and you have received support for several efforts since the time your APR report was written. The College Relations department helped create two promotional videos and a radio advertisement. The office of the Vice President for Instruction provided funding for the Health Careers Expo in April 2017. If you have further projects that you think will help reach your enrollment goals, please contact your department Chair or Dean to find the necessary resources.

More equipment (automation, compounding, bar coding) - Requests for equipment that is beyond the scope of your departmental budget should go through the FIAT capital request process. Work with your Department Chair in Fall 2017 to submit a request.


Convert PT position to adjunct - there is a process in place for requesting new adjunct faculty positions. Please work with your Department Chair to create this request during Fall term 2017, to be considered by FIAT and the President in early 2018.

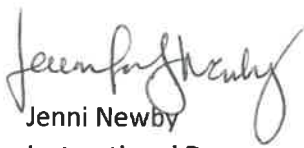
Make classroom look more like a pharmacy – Some changes have already been made to the classroom; adjustable height tables were purchased to simulate the counter in a pharmacy. Shelving and storage has been added to make the area feel more like the working environment. If further adaptations are needed, work with your department Chair or Dean to find the necessary resources for minor changes, or submit a request to FIAT and the President as described in the equipment section above.

The Pharmacy Technician program offers an efficient way for students to get trained for a rewarding career in a method that fits into busy schedules. This is such an effective and unique program, with passionate faculty to serve as advocates, that getting this message out into the community and increasing enrollment should be an achievable goal for the next few years.

Respectfully yours,

  
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