

**PROGRAM REVIEW: California Northstate University  
College of Health Sciences**

Program: Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences Dates of Review: June 17 through June 21, 2020

Reviewer: Betty Sundberg, EdD., Education Advisors

**External Program Review**

**Overview**

**History**

California Northstate University (CNU) was founded in 2007 by a group of visionary leaders to meet the healthcare needs of our communities. The success of the College of Pharmacy (COP) led to the establishment of the CNU College of Medicine (COM) as well as the College of Health Sciences (CHS) in June 2015.

CHS operates a unique health sciences undergraduate program dedicated to educating, developing, and training individuals for successful careers in the field. By completing the curriculum and embedded experiences, students will meet requirements to be admitted to most health professions programs.

**Accreditation**

The Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences was officially added to CNU as a degree-granting program in June 2015 through WSCUC's substantive change process. In June 2017, WSCUC reaffirmed CNU's accreditation of all degree granting programs. A mid-cycle review is scheduled for spring 2021.

**External Visit Summary**

The external review for California Northstate University – College of Health Sciences (CNUCHS) was conducted through the period of June 17<sup>th</sup> through June 21, 2020. The College submitted a substantial body of documents, to include: 1) Self-Study of the program 2015 through 2019; 2) Multiple Appendices documenting details of efforts relative to CHS and the BSHS, that included the College Program Review Handbook. On response to the request from the External Reviewer, the institution also provided additional documents confirming Meetings of the Curriculum Committee. Review and Assessment was conducted on all provided materials to assess the Program Review for the Bachelor Science, Health Services.

**Resources for the Program Review – External Reviewer**

Resource materials for this process used by the External Reviewer, included the following WSCUC-created materials: a) "Suggested Approaches for Evaluating Program Review", b) the WSCUC Program Learning Outcomes Rubric for assessing the quality of academic Program Learning Outcomes

(PLOs), and c) the WSCUC Program Review Rubric, assessing integration of student learning into the Program Review.

#### Rationale for Document Use

The WSCUC Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Rubric assesses if the PLOs are appropriate to the program subject; the Program Review Rubric assesses the effectiveness of student learning within the program under review. Both of these processes were deemed appropriate and applicable to the requested External Review.

Following is a Summary of External Reviewer's Findings:

### **Areas of Strength and Commendations**

#### **Commendations:**

##### Learning Outcomes

Attachment 2.2, Academic Affairs – Learning Outcomes, provided detail on Learning Outcomes to include ILOs, PLOS, GELOs, and was particularly impressive. At first review, there was concern the LOs were so parallel with one another in each category it would be difficult to establish which LOs were being reviewed. With additional assessment, however, this document also includes a rubric for each category of the Outcomes with rubric distinctions from Initial to Proficient, evidencing a refinement of comprehensiveness with the process, and a clear delineation between the outcomes under review. This material, complimented by the documented benchmarking of PLO acquisition, Appendix 2.1 (Academic Affairs – Signature Assignment – Curricular Map) and 2.7, (Student Learning Outcomes Performance) was particularly impressive. Finally, the document List of Changes, confirms the ongoing process CHS has internalized for continued growth the program review and assessment processes. The specific identified “next steps” with both GELOs and PLOs provides additional confidence of the awareness and intentionality of review, assessment, with changes where warranted. Multiple examples of program review or delivery modification was presented, such the Organic Chemistry Course Series – modified exam structure (pilot study using course quizzes versus high stakes exams to validate learning outcomes).

##### Admission and Pathways

The College has demonstrated particular awareness of its student population with alternatives for admission. The Pathway option, encouraging students to transition from completion of the bachelor's degree to programs of professional study was impressive (note pages 9 through 16 of the Program Review document). With identified statistical trends of achievement in matriculating from undergraduate to graduate study in professional fields within the health care environment, the College lives up to its stated purpose of Mission and Vision, “To advance the art and science of healthcare”.

##### Efforts to Address Academic Underperformance

The College has also documented attention and progress to addressing early identification and remedy, related to academic underperformance. This attention to detail, and sensitivity to meeting express needs of enrolled students is particularly impressive.

Examples include:

- In-time remediation (documented summary early alerts) , instead of end of course remediation – page 12. Analysis and assessment of difference made with this process = page 13 (underperforming grade drop from 8.1% 2019 to 2.9% final grades.
- Early evaluation of academic support (Peer Assistant Learners)
- Instructor implemented problem-solving activities and strategies
- Documented change in student passing grades

### Self-Study Preparation

Each of the key areas of operation of the College for the Program Review document included a summary of: Strengths; Opportunities for Improvement; and Future Directions affirming the information presented, highlighting future activity for the College; establishing the pathway for moving forward for ongoing program review and assessment with full participation of staff, administration, students, governance, and external professionals.

### Understanding the WSCUC Expectations for the Program Review Process

The CNU CHS Self Study Program Review Handbook emphasizes requirements of the regional accreditor, WSCUC, for Program Review, detailing the CFR's, Program Review Definition and Purpose, and Distinguishing Features of Program Review to address WSCUC areas of emphasis. The alignment between the review process emphasized by the College and documents provided as evidence of the process employed, documentation for validation of outcomes, and the subsequent internal review of the campus program review committee, increased confidence that the review process was clearly internalized.

## **Opportunities for Improvement**

### Data Collection - Diversity and Inclusion

Comprehensive materials are provided as evidence of data collection and use of that data in making informed decisions, but almost conspicuous by its absence in a clear statement relative to diversity and inclusion. Student Life, page 28, speaks to diversity and inclusion with a statement of Student Satisfaction with the way in which that/those issues are addressed by the College, but there is an opportunity to expand beyond the gender and geographic distribution for student enrollment. No detail was found that related to ethnic diversity present, nor specific opportunities to address other forms of diversity or recognition for inclusion to promote additional participation in professional programs; this is an opportunity that exists for the College. Gender distribution is recognized, with balanced representation for stated for CHS with self-reported data but is also stated there are fluctuations of the gender distribution annually. The College has an opportunity to consider both gender and ethnic enrollment, with efforts to affirm equal and fair opportunity in critical areas of diversity and inclusion.

### Faculty Performance and Review Assessment/ Scholarly Versus Professional Faculty Development

Chapter 4 of the Program Review Self-Study Report self-identifies an Opportunities for improvement in the category of the evaluation and feedback for faculty and staff. As noted, within Health Sciences only 50% of the part-time faculty hold terminal degrees; with the increased ability of the College moving forward with an affirmed program of instruction meeting learning outcomes, and students progressing from the bachelor's to professional programs in health sciences through the Pathway option, an opportunity exists for the College to implement additional expectations for its instructors, such as a benchmark of terminal degrees for FT faculty (as noted page 34). One opportunity is to implement a rigorous process for annual faculty review and assessment of performance; another opportunity is to

expand expectations related to Scholarly AND Professional Development Expectations as a part of that performance assessment process. Because the College is looking to promote professional higher education opportunities for its students, it might choose to look more actively to promoting both Scholarly and Professional development opportunities for its faculty.

Fiscal Operation and Support Related to Program Review and Assessment.

While there is reference to strategic planning and resource allocation to support program review and assessment, there is insufficient detail to assess if the College is using budgeting and resource allocation toward recognized opportunities for improvement. Allocation of resources could be applied toward meeting faculty needs, student support, faculty review and evaluation, and providing appropriate resources for research. Beyond the noted allocation for an additional stipend to support appropriate resources for research noted as an additional stipend, there is no budgeting or fiscal detail. An operational budget directed to program review needs and integrated specifically into the University/College Strategic Plan, would address this lapse.

## **SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW**

### **The First Stage of the External Review was Assessment of the Quality of Program Learning Outcomes**

This stage of the Review considered the following Criteria:

#### **Comprehensive List**

Program learning outcomes (PLOs) for the CNUCHS BSHS program are detailed clearly with Attachment 2.2 Additionally, the alignment between ILOs, PLOs, CLOs and GELOs is also established.

#### **WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.

#### **Assessable Outcomes**

Evidence of outcomes is presented with significant detail and examples. Student work, summarized, is presented to establish different levels of mastery for each outcome.

#### **WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and has identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.

#### **Alignment**

The curricula are aligned with program outcomes. Evidence provided that faculty are responsible for assessment, and that student support services, and co-curricular efforts are also aligned with anticipated outcomes.

#### **WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services and co- curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency

#### **Assessment Planning**

A Program Review Plan establishes the assessment of identified outcomes over an appropriate period of time. Documentation is provided that assessment plans are revised as needed.

#### **WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.

#### **The Student Experience**

Students are clearly engaged and involved in understanding what the outcomes mean and how they are applied. Course syllabi state expectations for Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) in examples provided, and curriculum mapping confirms alignment in addition to being used to assess the level at which the outcome has been verified.

**WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in the creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.

**OVERALL CRITIQUE OF QUALITY OF PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**WSCUC Overall Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

**Second Stage - External Review: Integration of Student Learning Assessment into Program Reviews**

This stage of the Review considered the following Criteria:

Elements of the Self-Study

Learning outcomes are established for the student, for the program and for the institution, with comprehensive engagement by Committees of faculty and administration. The Self-Study provided a major body of documents, to include Attachments evidenced accomplishment.

**WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

Faculty are required to evaluate the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment findings, bench-marking results, subsequent changes, and evidence concerning the impact of these changes. They present a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.

Process of Review

As a part of the External Review process, qualified individuals were identified to conduct External Reviews. This team was provided extensive materials and provided the opportunity to request additional materials is required, and to meet (via Zoom) with campus individuals. As confirmed with examples of Curriculum Committee meeting materials provided, it is evident the results of the External Reviews, will be provided internal campus decision-makers for future reference and changes if warranted,

**WSCUC Rubric Score Highly Developed**

Well-qualified internal and external reviewers evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. They give evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. The department uses the feedback to improve student learning.

Planning Budgeting:

While strategic planning is referenced in the Self Study Report, the only specific detail relates to professional development opportunities for faculty to hone teaching and scholarship skills; there is insufficient budgeting information provided to affirm how resources are allocated, the scale at which fiscal resources are committed to the processes of review and assessment, information literacy, or needed technology. Specifically, expectations for the program review process are expected to confirm informed decision-making, to include planning and budgeting, and resource allocation to address expectations of institutional quality assurance. Decision-making, relative to allocation of fiscal resources, should involve decision-makers at a variety of levels for the institution.

**WSCUC Rubric Score: Emerging/ Developed**

Emerging: The campus has attempted to integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but with limited success.

Developed: The campus generally integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but not through a formal process.

Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts

The College provides opportunity for all components of the campus community to become aware of assessment efforts, and to provide feedback on the process, on outcomes, and on opportunities for improvement. Evidence of program effectiveness considers professional programs to which students matriculate, student perceptions of all aspects of the college are assessed, and a faculty and staff self-evaluation is elicited as a part of the review. Specifically related to the program review process, CHS established a committee of administrators and faculty led by the Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Assessment. Results from assessment efforts, are returned to this Committee, which has responsibility to provide regular reports to the campus administration and faculty.

**WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. Departments effectively use the feedback to improve student learning. Follow-up activities enjoy institutional support.

The Student Experience

The Self Study Report included a full complement of information related to student perception of the program under review, and the variety of mechanisms by which the College assesses and reports back data on student attitudes and perceptions. The only area that did not rank within the established benchmark, related to course and faculty evaluations. Data from student surveys is shared with Department Chairs and with faculty, with changes confirmed for curricula, professional development, and campus growth.

**WSCUC Rubric Score: Highly Developed**

Students are respected partners in the program review process. They may offer poster sessions on their work, demonstrate how they apply rubrics to self-assess, and/or provide their own evaluative feedback.

**OVERALL CRITIQUE – Integration of PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES into Program Reviews**

**WSCUC Overall Rubric Score: Highly Developed**



**Team members:**

Dr. Leanne Coyne

**Date(s) and Location of Review:**

Remote review. Meetings available upon request.

**Summary of Review (including documents and evidence reviewed, constituencies with whom team met, and other relevant information)**

The review was conducted remotely from June 15<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. Documents reviewed included the program review self-study report and supporting appendices provided by CHS.

The findings of the review are outlined below:

**Areas of Strength and Commendations**

***Service Learning Experiences:***

The curriculum provides ample opportunities for students to develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary to succeed in a career in healthcare. All students enroll in a semester-long community service learning experience after completing an introductory course in the foundations of service learning. Through reflections, students assess their own growth. 100% of community partners reported that the program had a beneficial impact, demonstrating the success of this program. This experience provides students with an opportunity to learn about and contribute to the community while also gaining skills that can enhance their applications to professional programs.

***Learning Outcomes:***

Learning outcomes are mapped to the curriculum and are assessed at all levels using rubrics. Signature assignments have been identified that represent each outcome, ensuring that all outcomes are assessed. This includes outcomes at all levels, including course, program, institutional and general education outcomes. Course syllabi provide clear, concise expectations to students about learning outcomes and how they will be assessed. General education outcomes are systematically integrated into well-designed signature assignments such as the embedded research projects that develop various skills such as scientific reasoning with English composition. Through this discovery-driven learning process, students develop and demonstrate all general education learning outcomes. The longitudinal integration of general education outcomes allows students to build on their skills throughout the curriculum.

***Culture of Assessment:***

The college is to be commended for seeking and acting upon the opinions of all stakeholders. Students have the opportunity to express their opinions through student government and provide feedback through an annual student engagement survey. A high percent of students who completed the engagement survey report that they feel comfortable expressing their opinions. Faculty and staff opinions are sought through annual satisfaction surveys, and results of these surveys have resulted in changes. For example, when





faculty reported low satisfaction with resources for research and scholarship, a seed grant program was initiated.

The college is also to be commended for investing in training faculty in the assessment of student learning. Faculty are regularly trained in areas such as formative and summative assessment and rubric design. Further evidence of a growing culture of assessment is demonstrated through faculty actively seeking assessment data to gain insights that may help make improvements to courses and instruction. Mid-semester check ins to collect formative feedback from students that can be incorporated into the remainder of the course.

***Early Academic Alerts:***

Academic alerts serve to identify underperforming students early in the course. Once an academic alert is activated, students are required to meet with their advisor to complete an academic recovery contract, which includes various interventions. The percent of early academic alerts is consistently higher than the number of underperforming final grades, suggesting that the early warning system is effective in identifying and correcting underperformance.

***Peer Assistant Learners:***

The college is to be commended on its investment in its peer assistant learner program. Requiring peer tutors to complete and pass a one-credit hour course where they are trained in pedagogy ensures that peer tutors are equipped with the tools that they need to be effective.

***Student Professional Development:***

The college provides students with numerous opportunities for professional development. Faculty advisors serve as mentors to students through the faculty advising system. A comprehensive advising guide for both students and faculty clearly outlines roles, responsibilities and timelines. Students report a high level of satisfaction with the faculty advising process.

Workshops and services provided by the media and communications studio give students the opportunity for ongoing professional development. Additionally, the college has an engaged student body with many opportunities for professional growth, including governance and contributing to a college publication.

***Admissions:***

As acknowledged in the self study, the college has fewer applications than peer institutions. However, applications have continued to increase steadily each year, highlighting the success of recruitment efforts. The college also has plans for increased advertisement and recruitment efforts in the future.

**Areas for Improvement and Recommendations**

***Survey Response Rates:***

The college noted that response rates to the student engagement survey have remained consistently low. Participation rates for faculty and staff surveys also declined from 2016 to 2019. The college is encouraged to identify and address potential factors that may be contributing to low response rates, as well as developing strategies that may encourage increased participation.



***Matriculation Rates for 3+4 BS to MD:***

As acknowledged in the report, fewer students than expected matriculated from the 3+4 BS to MD program. It is recommended that further investigation should be conducted, to determine potential causes of low matriculation compared to other pathway programs.

***Workshop Attendance:***

The college offers a variety of professional development workshops for students, faculty and staff, but attendance has been low. The college is encouraged to find mechanisms to increase attendance at these workshops and to evaluate if student attendance is impacted by the presence of faculty and staff.

***Faculty Development:***

Faculty are encouraged to participate in professional development programs, but as the majority of faculty are of junior rank, it is recommended that a formal faculty development plan be implemented. It is also recommended that faculty outside of the college be sought to serve as mentors to junior faculty if internal senior faculty are not available.

***Research and Scholarship:***

Faculty reported low satisfaction with their time allotted and support for research and scholarship. Although a seed grant program has been implemented and more time is expected to become available as the college and curriculum mature, there is not yet evidence for improved satisfaction in this area. It is recommended that the college continues to collect data regarding faculty satisfaction with their time and support for research and scholarship.

***External Student Scholarships:***

Although the university has funded a significant amount of scholarships, success in securing external funds for scholarships has been low. The college is encouraged to continue to seek external opportunities to support student scholarships.



**Program Review Rubric**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)</b>	Program has developed objectives but no outcomes' statements.	Program has developed outcomes' statements but has not developed assessment tools.	Program has developed outcomes' statements and evaluation rubrics. Program employs these assessments to measure students' PLO achievement.	Program has developed outcomes' statements and evaluation rubrics; assessments are imbedded in curriculum. Rubrics are used to measure and document students' achievement of PLOs.
<b>Assessment Plan</b>	A cyclical assessment plan exists that details specific programmatic and institutional assessments.	A cyclical assessment plan that details specific programmatic and institutional assessments exists. Assessment plan is reviewed and revisited. Portions of the plan are followed, and assessment results are compiled.	A cyclical assessment plan that details specific programmatic and institutional assessments exists. Assessment plan is reviewed and revisited. Most parts of the plan are followed, and the plan is regularly revisited and updated. Assessment results are compiled and analyzed.	A cyclical assessment plan that details specific programmatic and institutional assessments exists. Assessment plan is regularly followed, reviewed, and updated. Assessment results are compiled, analyzed, and communicated to constituencies. Assessment results are used to create action plans, which are used for institutional and programmatic improvements and are reassessed as part of the cycle of improvement.
<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence of improvements in program is lacking. Few, if any, changes in curriculum, pedagogy, or assessments are reported.	Evidence of improvements in program is minimal. Changes in curriculum, pedagogy, or assessments are reported, but there is not sufficient evidence of reassessment or of programmatic improvement.	Some changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and/or assessments based on assessment results are reported and documented.	Evidence of improvements in program is abundant and documented. Changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and/or assessments are reported and reassessed. Assessments demonstrate a cycle of improvement.
<b>Results and Impact</b>	Assessment results are compiled but not analyzed, communicated, and/or used for planning purposes. Assessments rarely lead to programmatic and institutional improvement.	Assessment results are compiled and often analyzed but are not always communicated or used for planning purposes. Assessments sometimes lead to programmatic and institutional improvement.	Assessment results are compiled, analyzed, and communicated to constituencies. Assessment cycle often lead to programmatic and institutional improvement.	Assessment results are compiled, analyzed, communicated, and used to plan improvements. Assessment cycle regularly lead to programmatic and institutional improvement.