

Academic Program Review (APR) Exit Meeting Presentation

Part I: Cover Page

Program/Department: Department of Health, Exercise & Sports Sciences
Exit Meeting Date: 10/19/21

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This report is based on information and materials provided by the Department of Health, Exercise & Sports Sciences and the Office of Academic Affairs prior to the on-site visit and information garnered from faculty, staff and students on October 18-19, 2021.

Part II: Body

Report Summary

Overall Program Strengths

The Department of Health, Exercise and Sports Sciences is a well-respected department across the country. The department houses nationally-recognized programs that facilitate active research agendas. A resounding theme was clearly evident during the Review Team's (RT) on-site visit, from the self-report and via individual meetings with students, faculty, staff and administrators, was faculty and staff collegiality. Considering the diverse nature of the department, this is an anomaly, for which the department faculty and staff should be commended. Department faculty and staff were highly supportive of one another in all aspects of teaching, research, and service. Each faculty member, adjunct faculty, part time instructor (PTI), and staff member was student-focused, demonstrating the desire to do what is best for students even at the expense of their own professional agenda. Finally, the community service and outreach of this department is thriving. The Exercise Science (EXSC) program offers labs/testing assessments to the general public and university population. The Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) program interacts and supports the public through teaching and providing physical activity opportunities through a variety of youth sport and physical education initiatives. The Sports Administration (SA) program runs summer youth sports programs and faculty members are active in contributing professional expertise in a variety of manners. The Health Education (HED) program collaborates with a plethora of community health programs throughout the state and region to provide service to many segments of the populations as well as offering internship opportunities for students, providing additional valuable service to the community and the state. The Athletic Training (AT) faculty have long-standing partnerships with Albuquerque Public Schools, Kirkland Air Force Base, and UNM Athletics, which will serve them well as they transition into the new Masters degree program.

Criterion 1: Introductory Background

Overall Findings (select one): Exceeds (E)

Due to the introductory nature of this criterion, strengths/shortcomings may not be necessary

Findings on strengths:

The content provided offered complete information on the history of the varying programs. They clearly demonstrated how they adapted to different challenges and capitalized on various opportunities.

Findings on shortcomings: N/A

Criterion 2: Teaching & Learning: Curriculum

Overall Findings (select one): Met with Concerns (MC)

Findings on strengths:

Faculty were clearly knowledgeable and competent in each specific area of expertise. The faculty showed support for all programs within HESS, for other faculty and staff and for the students. Students expressed enjoyment and satisfaction with course content, the faculty and staff, and their program experiences as a whole. Documents and student interviews indicated a variety of active, hands-on experiences for students integrated into the core curriculum. Each of the programs were clearly and openly inclusive of all students and their interests. The HESS students come from a variety of differing backgrounds (e.g., working full time, taking care of children and/or adult family members, intermittent access to wifi), and the faculty has accommodated them to the best of their ability.

Findings on shortcomings:

To facilitate an efficient and effective “time to graduation” for undergraduate students, providing a varying rotation of program electives (particularly for the HED program) may ensure students are able to enroll in courses allowing them to graduate sooner and provide a more enriching curriculum. Additionally, if the internal university structure will allow it, the RT suggests expanding all HESS program internships to allow for year-round options, including summer sessions. Integrations of specific career advisement into the first year student experience may help students identify their major and/or career objective earlier, which will allow the students to identify a specific course sequence to facilitate graduation in a timely manner.

With regard to graduate programs, the credit hour load appears to be incredibly high and should be closely examined for possible reduction in order to encourage timely graduation rates for these students. The HESS faculty are encouraged to examine the doctoral/PhD curricula to consider the adoption of a more research and/or manuscript-based model as opposed to a content-specific experience. This may help differentiate the Masters programs from the PhD programs as well, leading to different Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for assessment purposes.

Criterion 3: Teaching & Learning: Assessment

Overall Findings (select one): Met (M)

Findings on strengths:

Every program within HESS had clearly written SLOs that were consistently implemented, assessed and reviewed, as directed by the institution.

Findings on shortcomings:

As SLO requirements continue, we recommend programs move toward appropriate SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound) goals to evaluate students and program effectiveness. HESS programs should specifically evaluate the number of SLOs within each program for clarity and potential duplication.

Criterion 4: Students

Overall Findings (select one): Met with Concerns (MC)

Findings on strengths:

The HESS department generates nearly one-third of student credit hour production in the COEHS. Their undergraduate enrollment constitutes approximately 40% of that of the College of Education.

Undergraduate PETE students are employed at an approximate 100% rate. The demand is high. The enrollment is, unfortunately, low.

Undergraduate EXSC students have been successful regarding employment and admissions to graduate studies. Students expressed high levels of appreciation in terms of Department and faculty communication regarding career and educational opportunities.

Undergraduate HED students also displayed an optimistic outlook regarding job and graduate education opportunities. The internships have led to many job offers for students. The online HED program has allowed for more hands-on projects, according to the student interviews.

Graduate students appear to be successful in terms of employment, publications, presentations and scholarships. All of the graduate students interviewed (MS and PhD) clearly articulated engaging and innovative research opportunities and support received from the HESS department.

Findings on shortcomings:

While the RT did not have access to the College budget, it is recommend that an equitable percentage of the budget be devoted to HESS in terms of faculty, facilities, and resources, as reflected by the number of students served and the number of student credit hours generated.

Although, there has been an overall decline in total enrollment in HESS, this is reflective of the University as a whole. Student credit hours continue to remain high due to the HED program (electives and minor) and the Physical Education Activity Program (PENP).

Currently, the academic advising is centralized. Although it was indicated that academic advisors are prepared to advise all students in the College based on their specific major, multiple student reports indicated that advising effectiveness and subsequent level of student satisfaction, is lacking in terms of knowledge of curriculum for specific programs in HESS. For example, advisors refer the students to the faculty (via email) because they are unsure of answers regarding courses/credits. Faculty in HESS do not receive “credit” in their distribution of effort load for advising. Specifically, one faculty member in EXSC chooses to advise those students (n=180+) to assist with their curriculum and course enrollment each semester. The RT recommends that academic advisement better reflect students’ career goals regarding course enrollment/requirements for specific career paths.

For recruitment purposes, the RT suggests HESS and the COEHS consider solidifying articulation agreements with community colleges and branch campuses to effectively and efficiently facilitate incoming students matriculation into UNM and HESS.

Another recruitment suggestion is to better utilize current social media outlets. Departmental Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook and other pages may attract students and foster more frequent communication/information sharing. This type of communication may also attract parents/families of students, making everyone feel more like a member of the UNM family. The key is finding faculty, students, and/or staff to maintain the pages.

Criterion 5: Faculty

Overall Findings (select one): Met (M)*

Findings on strengths:

Current faculty members meet and exceed all credentials and professional development requirements. The collegiality among faculty is unparalleled to any similar institution.

Findings on shortcomings*:

Based on our observations and documents provided, course releases or distribution of effort should be modified in order for the limited number of HESS faculty to meet the needs of current enrollment/credit hour production (e.g., give credit for teaching overloads, program chair, other service). There are clearly not enough faculty in HESS to support the high credit hour production. HESS hires several Part-time Instructors (PTI) each semester in order to meet student demand for courses. While PTI can contribute to the success of each program, over reliance on PTI may foster some degree of inconsistency in instruction resulting in program accreditation concerns if the consistency of instruction is in jeopardy. In light of this, HESS needs additional tenure-track faculty to support their programs, especially if the impetus is for them to continue to grow in terms of enrollment and credit hour production.

The PENP program is an untapped resource, which currently generates over 3500 credit hours per semester. Currently, this program is run by a .5 visiting lecturer position. The RT strongly suggests converting that position into a tenure-track line, as the remaining .5 can be devoted to programs within the department. The PENP is a viable source for recruitment for all HESS programs and should be treated as a valuable commodity.

In looking to the future, it appears that approximately 4-6 faculty will be retiring in the next 5 years. With multiple thriving programs in HESS, it is imperative that these faculty are replaced, not only with assistant level faculty, but with associate/full level faculty so these people can come in prepared to guide graduate students in the varying programs.

Criterion 6: Research, Scholarship, & Service

Overall Findings (select one): Exceeds (E)

Findings on strengths:

Faculty research productivity is commendable, given their limited resources and high teaching loads.

In terms of community engagement, faculty clearly have met the charge to be “the front porch” for the College of Education and the University as a whole.

Both undergraduate and graduate students have more than ample opportunities to conduct research alongside faculty.

Findings on shortcomings:

Grant management support appears to be lacking within the college, serving as a hindrance to grant productivity. Pre-grant support and post-award support do not seem to be sufficient for faculty with specific need in the post-award area. Faculty provided numerous examples of instances in which they followed through with their responsibilities for grant funding, but steps were missed “up the chain”. One example involves multiple agreements and MOAs that were approved with two local schools who were providing funding for HESS doctoral students to provide physical education and after school programming for students in their schools. The contracts were signed and approved. The doctoral students provided the services. Two months into the program, the students were still not being paid due to appropriate documents “falling through the cracks.” This resulted in graduate students not being paid, and with their limited income, they were struggling to make ends meet. This reflects poorly on the department, College and University. The response that was received from the Office of Graduate Studies was that the students will be paid at a prorated rate.

Another example includes a faculty member who has spent years establishing a positive relationship with a local tribe. Part of her responsibilities on an NIH funded grant were to work with and conduct interviews the members of the tribe over the summer. The modest amount of funding (\$2000) she was to receive was rejected at the Provost level as it exceeded the percent

allocation during summer months. There was no explanation provided other than to respect the decision. The lack of humanity in this response is disappointing, given that the faculty member is now left to determine whether to simply do the work above and beyond without being compensated or to risk ruining the relationship she had established with the tribe. In essence, faculty do not feel incentivized to apply for and secure grant funding.

The limited lab space and outdated equipment hinders EXSC faculty from conducting/disseminating research. They receive hand-me-down equipment such as weights, weight machines, and treadmills from the university campus recreation center.

Criterion 7: Peer Comparisons

Overall Findings (select one): Met (M)

Findings on strengths:

These comparisons were thoughtfully completed with appropriate rationale provided. HESS faculty are generally performing at or beyond the level of those at peer institutions/programs.

Findings on shortcomings:

Faculty to student ratio was less than that of peer institutions, indicating that HESS faculty serve many more students than other faculty.

The RT recommends HESS programs focus on true peer or peer aspirant institutions, as some of the comparisons did not appear to be recognized in the same research classification as UNM. The RT acknowledges this is a difficult task to complete, given the diversity of HESS programs.

Criterion 8: Resources & Planning

Overall Findings (select one): Met with Concerns (MC)

Findings on strengths:

Staff members appear to be of high quality and deliver outstanding levels of service to the department and students. They are very professional and inviting. The shared staff model may present some challenges during its initial implementation, but the staff themselves and faculty seem to believe the process will ultimately be effective.

Findings on shortcomings:

It appears that a very small portion of the departmental budget is available as discretion funds (e.g., high percentage allocated to personnel and building requirements).

On a consistent basis, the budget should be increased and guaranteed for PTIs, given the potential for credit hour generation.

This department clearly needs more tenure-track faculty lines in order to maintain the current number of student credit hours and the enrollment. If the suggestion is for HESS to increase enrollment and credit hour production, they will need additional tenure-track lines in order to facilitate this process.

Professional development resources should be made more available for instructors (both tenure track and non-tenure track) with additional opportunities extended to those in lecture lines.

As the AT program transitions to a graduate-only program, considerations for meeting program CAATE accreditation standards will need to be addressed. These include release time for the clinical education coordinator as well as where the program must be housed.

Criterion 9: Facilities

Overall Findings (select one): Met with Concerns (MC)

Findings on strengths:

The Johnson Building (home of HESS) is well-kept with outstanding maintenance, despite the age of the facility. The maintenance staff and building supervisors should be commended.

Findings on shortcomings:

The lab space for EXSC needs to be reconfigured/expanded. The equipment needs to be systematically updated (e.g., specific machines replaced every 3 years). Additional, modest lab fees/increases should be considered to offset costs. Lab space can be improved with better utilization of available space upstairs. Currently, the nutrition lab should be considered as usable space for HESS students as it appears to be used sparsely throughout the year. Perhaps an agreement could be established in which that space is made available to the nutrition faculty during the limited number of days they need it, and HESS is able to utilize the space the remainder of the academic year. Otherwise, it appears to be a missed opportunity to use a prime space that may benefit a large number of students.

The aesthetics of classroom spaces are less than desirable. Some of the classrooms have no natural light. The furniture in the rooms is outdated. Faculty have done a commendable job working to fund updated teaching equipment (e.g., overhead projectors, smart boards).

Faculty obtain items from University surplus to fill the needs in the building. Multiple tables and chairs for students to use as work spaces in the nooks and crannies of the building were claimed by faculty. Faculty and staff use their own vehicles to load and unload the furniture in the building to make the space more inviting and user-friendly for students. Desks for teaching assistants were obtained as hand-me-downs from Engineering. HESS does not receive funds to needed to purchase new furniture for student or faculty use.

Without appropriate upgrades/expansion/changes, growth in enrollment will be hindered.

Conclusion. Strategic Planning

Overall Findings (select one): Met (M)

Findings on strengths:

Given the limited resources, these faculty have improved their teaching spaces and faculty conference workspaces.

Faculty productivity in terms of grant funding, publications, presentations, and service has increased overall since the last academic program review.

Students appear to be more successful with increased credit hours, improved access for those in rural areas, and increased access for working students.

Findings on shortcomings:

Plans to explore future growth areas, especially in terms of online programs or certificates are warranted.