External Consultant’s Review Report

Holistic Health Minor Program

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback for the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Holistic Health Minor (HHM) program as part of their five-year academic program review and self-assessment process. I reviewed the self-study program review document prepared by the program coordinator, Mary Lou Galantino and her team prior to my site visit. In my role as an external consultant reviewing the program, I made a site visit to the Stockton campus on March 2, 2011 and interviewed HHM students/faculty, current and previous coordinators of HHM, the staff and the librarian associated with HHM, the dean of General Studies, the Chief Planning Officer, and the Provost. During the site visit, I self-toured the campus and facilities as well as listened to student/faculty research poster presentations and attended one of the 11th annual Day of Scholarship presentations. It is my intention for this report to serve as a supplement to the five-year HHM academic program review process.

I would like to commend Richard Stockton College of New Jersey for its vision and initiative to offer a truly interdisciplinary Holistic Health minor program in the School of General Studies. According to the landmark 2008 study (Barnes, et. al) using the 2007 National Health Interview Survey data, almost four out of ten adults used some forms of complementary and alternative medicine in a one-year period. Stockton is responding to growing public needs to learn more about holistic and/or complementary alternative approaches to health and wellness. Stockton HHM also prepares diverse service professionals whose knowledge and exposure to such holistic experience would become an asset in their prospective careers.

This report begins with a summary of the materials and resources I used to conduct my review of the HHM program. Next, the strengths of the MMH program are highlighted. This report concludes with observations regarding potential areas for strengthening and recommendations for continuous program growth.
Summary of Materials and Resources Used to Develop this Report

- Self-guided tour of the Stockton campus
- Holistic Health Minor Program five-year review self-study report submitted by the HHM coordinator, Mary Lou Galantino, PT, Ph.D.
- Coordinator’s Report 2007-2008
- Coordinator’s Report 2008-2009
- Appendix A: HHM Assessment Matrix & HHM Course Syllabi
- Appendix B: Flyers for HHM Presentations
- Data from HHM Student Survey (GNM 2201, 1026, 2206, ANTH 2136, PSYC 3635, 2212, 3242, GSS 3160, GIS 4636, CRIM 2141, GEN 2319)
- Coordinator’s Report 2009-2010
- IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Group Summary Report on HHM (F08-Sp10)
- HHM websites
  - Holistic Health Minor  
    http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=18&pageID=36
  - Library Resource Guides (LibGuides Subject Holistic Health) at  
    http://libguides.stockton.edu/content.php?pid=191934
  - Registrar Most Frequently Asked Questions, Spring 2011 Interdisciplinary Minor Course Offerings  
    http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/sturecords/content/docs/forms/Spring%202011%20Interdisciplinary%20Minors%20Course%20Offerings.pdf
- The LITT at RSCNJ Facebook community page  
  http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-LITT-Program-at-RSCNJ/245341072249
- Interview with Dr. Harvey Kesselman, Provost & Claudia Keenan, Chief Planning Officer
- Interview with Dr. Jan Colijn, Dean, General Studies
- Interview with Dr. Mary Lou Galantino, HHM Coordinator
- Interview with Dr. Ron Caplan, Former HHM Coordinator
- Interview with five HHM faculty and one staff
  - Tom Nolan who teaches Health and Healing
  - Elaine Bukowski, PT, DPT, MS, (D)ABDA
  - Marcella Spinella, PhD
  - Joan Perks, MSN
  - Ann Walker, MSN
  - Patricia Donahue
- Interview with Dr. David Pinto, Director of Library
- Interview with three current HHM students: Patricia (Social Work), Marita (Public Health), & Jacquelyn (Art)
- Wrap up meeting with MSA subcommittee
  - Mary Lou Galantino, Ph.D.
  - Joan Perks, MSN
Description of Holistic Health Minor (HHM) Program Strengths

Overview

The HHM program has been developed as an interdisciplinary minor within the School of General Studies along with six other minors. The demand grew from less than ten students in 2006 to 28 in 2008 while the number declined to seven-teen during the following two years. As per Claudia Keenan, Chief Planning Officer, HHM is the second largest minor following Women’s, Genders, and Sexuality Studies Minor. As per IDEA HHM group summary report (student course evaluations) Fall 2008-2010, HHM courses demonstrate higher than the IDEA database and Stockton average for “progress on relevant objectives, excellent teachers, and excellent course.” The HHM faculty shows their enthusiasm in teaching such courses. In addition, the successive three program coordinators have contributed to develop, enhance the program quality, and assess its full potential. Furthermore, the administration supports further development of HHM and its potential as a unique liberal art university community of learners, teachers, and scholars.

Curriculum

- Attracts students in various majors (e.g. social work, public health, art, etc.)
- Meets the demands of the evolving field of holistic/integrative health by adding new courses created by faculty from various disciplines
- Develops collaborative relationship with local industries as evidenced by the use of yoga studios for yoga-based research conducted by the HHM faculty and their students

Program Coordinators

- The first HHM program coordinator, Ron Caplan, Ph.D., in Public Health is an outstanding leader and innovator to create HHM at Stockton. He planned and introduced innovative events/programs, such as Tai Chi for fall prevention, Tai Chi workshop for students, Holistic Health Continuing Educational Series (monthly presentations given by the HHM coordinator and faculty). He continues to be an integral part of the HHM faculty by offering a freshman seminar that is one of the required courses in HHM. It is noteworthy to review his original proposal of Holistic Health Institute where the HHM faculty may have more research and funding opportunity making closer ties with the community.
- The 2nd HHM program coordinator, Tara Crowell, Ph.D., in Public Health introduced/developed HHM Assessment matrix that contains course objectives to be assessed, assessment tools, analysis, and course revision plan based on the assessment. Based on this formal assessment plan, realistic modifications to the HHM curriculum have been made (e.g., as per 2009-2010 coordinator report, three additional courses are added in the cluster B based on the preliminary assessment results that indicated lack of options). Dr. Crowell indicated in her 2009-2010 report
that relocation of the HHM transfer to School of Health Science may help promote the HHM program as well as more HHM faculty involvement in the HHM.

- The most recent and current program coordinator, Mary Lou Galantino, Ph.D., is a charismatic leader who not only passionately lead the HHM program but also provide creative solutions for HHM students who have limited time to complete their minor before their planned graduation. Dr. Galantino is well respected by the Stockton community and shows a potential to grow the HHM program further. Dr. Galantino demonstrates her active research activities involving her students and colleagues in the merging areas between holistic health and physical therapy.

Faculty and Staff

- There are exceptional faculty members as evidenced by student comments (“Excellent course and professor really explains various aspects of healthcare in an interesting way”).
- The faculty demonstrates their passion in teaching courses within HHM program.
- The faculty and their students engage in their original research relevant to HHM, as evidenced in the review document as well as through various presentations at the Scholarship Day on March 2, 2011.
- The faculty applies for grants to support their research activities.
- The faculty utilizes counseling center and other resources for their HHM students in crisis situations.
- The faculty offers HHM-relevant and innovative workshops (e.g. mindfulness meditation) to the Stockton community.
- The Wellness Center and Career Development Center sponsor weekly meditations for the Stockton community.

Students

- According to the IDEA summary report created by Heather McGovern, HHM students are more likely than average Stockton students to focus on gaining factual knowledge, learning fundamental principles, and developing a clearer understanding of and commitment to personal values.
- HHM students are predominantly female. This fact is consistent with the user profiles of complementary and alternative medicine in the US, but increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity and the SAT score at Stockton.

Library

- The Stockton Library added Holistic Health Subject specific Library Guides (LibGuides) in a timely responsive manner on its website. This database provides a quick review of recommended online databases, web sites, books, journals, and other resources for students and faculty to begin their research in Holistic Health.

Support of Stockton Administration
• The HHM program has the strong support of Jan Colijn, Dean, School of General Studies.
• The HHM program has support of Harvey Kesselman, Provost, and Claudia Keenan, Chief Planning Officer.
• The HHM program has the potential support of Brenda Stevenson Marshall, PhD, MPH, MAE, Dean, School of Health Sciences.
Recommendations for Strengthening the HHM Program

The faculty, program coordinator, and the administration of Stockton are invited to consider the following recommendations for further strengthening the program. Recommendations are organized under the following subheadings.

- Marketing and promotion of the HHM program
- Curriculum/Program Development
- Communication

Marketing and Promotion of the HHM program

With the understanding that the faculty members and the program coordinator have their own responsibilities associated with their home discipline and are serving HHM voluntarily without compensation, some of the recommendations here may justify some additional funding and/or other innovative approaches, such as recruiting student workers. For this purpose, some additional points are listed below.

- Update Holistic Health Web page information with visuals, testimonials, news, etc.
- Create a one-page flyer about the HHM program and distribute it to all the freshman seminar faculty for information dissemination targeted at an earlier academic career stage
- Encourage all the HHM faculty to introduce HHM to the class at least once during the semester (make one-page flyer and minor declaration form available)
- Place one-page flyer about HHM program at key areas on campus, such as the Wellness Center, Career Center, fitness room, library, dining hall, dormitory halls, reception area of the Dean of General Studies.
- Add “Holistic Health Minor Program” visible on all extracurricular event flyers and email announcements, as it was done for the Introductory mindfulness workshop by Marcello Spinella, Ph.D., on Oct. 16, 2008 as well as Ron Chapman’s lecture/meditation on March 7, 2008.
- Create a Face Book community page for the Stockton HHM program to attract multi-media generation/Face Book users among and beyond Stockton (see example at http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-LITT-Program-at-RSCNJ/245341072249 The LITT at RSCNJ Facebook). Once you have a sizable “like” individuals, it is easy and sustainable to invite people to various HHM events without the need of paper flyers.

Curriculum/Program Development

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program, it is not clear how each semester’s HHM course offerings are determined. The number of courses offered in fall or spring semester ranged from two to eleven courses during 2006 to 2010. As expressed by the provost and the faculty, the Stockton administration appears to support individual faculty’s passionate topics to teach even though such topics may not be within their original disciplines. This gives a significant opportunity for interdisciplinary minors, such as HHM to add innovative and attractive courses to serve the current
diverse student body. It is also noted that signature courses of the faculty members may disappear as they retire and not having the successor being trained. To provide consistency and predictability of the program offering, the following is suggested.

- Create a master schedule or at least indicate which courses are regularly offered
- Identify potential new courses by mass emailing department chairs for their input or contacting potential faculty in advance
- Conduct alumni survey to determine how the HHM program impacted their employment opportunity, their quality of life, life style choices, etc. after graduation
- Form a yearly focus group of current students to identify curriculum/program modification needs
- Continue modifying the HHM assessment plan based on the complete assessment cycle to determine the curriculum/course revision needs as well as to provide future budgetary recommendations
- Develop suggested (or sample) course selections for each major (e.g. Psych major GNM2201, GEN4511, GEN 2516, PSYC2212 & 3635)
- Indicate on the website as well as elsewhere that any major including Art can pursue HHM

**Communication**

- To facilitate the HHM faculty involvement in all aspects of the HHM, a face-to-face HHM faculty meeting at least once a semester may be beneficial.
- To facilitate all Stockton faculty members’ knowledge about HHM program, announcements of all interdisciplinary minors and their program coordinators at an annual fall faculty meeting may be helpful. The Provost could point to a one-page listing on the table to promote the faculty members’ attention. This may also ameliorate the current challenge the program coordinator faces, i.e., to know who might be interested in teaching HHM courses in the future.
- HHM students may benefit from developing a sense of holistic health sub-community within Stockton campus life. Assuming all students are busy scattered around, HHM Face Book may serve as an initial communication forum. Through such connections, students may develop a sense of belonging and then this sense of community may lead to initiating student club, such as Holistic Health Student Club that was originally considered as a potential in the 2007-2008 coordinator’s report.
- Currently, there seems no clear consensus among the HHM faculty members on where the HHM should be housed. It may be beneficial to discuss further among the HHM faculty members to reach a consensus. It should then be communicated to the Stockton’s very supportive administration in order to reach the program’s full potential.
Conclusion

Stockton’s vision statement was finalized in 2010: “an environmentally-responsible learning community of engaged citizens embracing a global perspective.” This serves as a foundation for the Holistic Health Minor program. In addition, Stockton’s value of diversity is reflected in the HHM student demographic data. This report highlighted the many strengths of this interdisciplinary minor program and provided recommendations for strengthening and continuous development of the program. While the public as well as diverse professionals’ desire to learn more about Holistic Health/integrative medicine are building continuously, the Stockton’s Holistic Health minor graduates may begin applying their keen self-awareness and holistic approaches to wellness regardless of their professions. Further assessment of the HHM program and its students and alumni will validate the power of this unique interdisciplinary minor program that continues to attract passionate faculty members and students from diverse disciplines.

References