

## **Administrative Response to Program Review Gerontology (GRN) Program December 2019**

On December 17, 2019, the Gerontology (GRN) SAC presented their Program Review findings to an audience of PCC administrators, community stakeholders, graduates, and others with an interest in the discipline. The presentation was thought provoking and highlighted many of the program's strengths. Students and graduates of the program were present, articulating the great and positive impacts of the program on their lives and careers.

This Administrative Response will: A) note particular highlights of the program and program review; B) provide feedback on assessment practices; C) additional observations, questions, and requests; and D) provide the administrative response to the SAC recommendations/resource requests.

### **Noteworthy Efforts or Achievements**

- Effective presentation with passionate and supportive testimonials from students and graduates.
- Passionate, engaged, and collaborative full-time and part-time faculty committed to continuous improvement of the program and community engagement/awareness-raising around issues related to the field of gerontology.
- Progressive *End Ageism*, *Flipping Mindsets*, and *Aging Education Series* programming bringing greater awareness to the community around important topics and movements in your field.
- Proactive partnership with advising redesign leadership on integration of the *Flipping Mindsets* project into the college's broader advising work.
- Use of livestream and other technologies to provide greater access for students.
- Integration of the GRN181 course at the beginning of the program to support career development/clarification of goals for students.
- Highly collaborative faculty team with an independent and high functioning SAC.
- Healthy and strong community partnerships and Advisory Committee.
- Reduction of certificates with recent curricular changes, including a small revamp of the HT course schedule.
- Meaningful internships in GRN and HT.

- Terrific branding and marketing materials: video, website, Geronaut theme and materials, etc.
- National recognition of program and faculty, with student engagement with faculty at the national level through presentations.
- Empowering students in their personal and professional development through the program.
- Terrific advocacy for our older students at PCC.

### **Feedback on Assessment**

We appreciate the intentionality of the mapping of degree and certificate outcomes with the General Education Competencies and to PCC's Core Outcomes and your assessment of the same via the TSAs. We would note, however, that using results of assessment to inform instruction is a key expectation. The Curriculum Revisions at the course level did not appear to have any relationship to student learning per se, though we can see that they might impact student completion. The summary of TSA assessment related only to accountability (all students are meeting benchmarks), but did not suggest targets for improvement.

The relevant NWCCU standard:

- **Old:** 4.B2 *The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements.*
- **New (2020):** 1.C.7 *The institution used the result of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning support planning and practice to continuously improve student learning outcomes.*

We do note references around the value to students of a more transparent assessment system in some of the reports filed under Learning Assessment in Spaces. It would have been helpful to include this in the summary of assessment in the Program Review.

### **Additional Observations, Questions, & Requests**

We greatly appreciate the dedication and passion of faculty to this program and its students. We share in your commitment to equitable student success and are in need of additional details to ensure that we are working in alignment with you to support the mission of the college.

By the end of spring term 2020, we'd like for you to submit a written report responding to the specific requests below. This report should be emailed to the VPAA, Sylvania Campus President, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Online Learning, and the four campus Deans of Instruction. Your Division Dean will

provide consultation and review of your document to ensure that this report is concise and responds directly to the questions asked.

1. We greatly appreciate your inclusion of data on the program in your program review document and presentation. After analyzing the program review documents and attending the presentation, we have remaining data requests that we believe are important to consider:
  - You mentioned in the program review presentation that most students don't go over 90 credits, but that some students with transfer credits end up with 150 or more.
    - **Student Total Number of Credits Accrued:** Please provide data indicating the number of credits accrued by each of the student graduates (for degree/certificates) over the past 3 years. This report should present an unduplicated student total number of credits. For example, if Sally Student earned multiple certificates, we'd like to see Sally's total credits earned. If the student has completed a credential but is still enrolled in the program, please provide this notation. Institutional Effectiveness is prepared to help you gather this data.
  - While the curriculum is progressive, nationally known, and clearly supports student development, it remains somewhat unclear to us how the program directly connects to workforce need for entry level positions. As framework, here is a quote from the state's requirements for a new program provide:

*The community college provides clear evidence of the need for the program. Program elements show the program need: is clearly indicated by labor market research based on current, valid and reliable information, statistics and forecasts; is based on current and projected employment demand that is not being met by training provided by existing programs; and will lead to jobs demonstrating opportunities for competitive wages and wage progression for program completers.*

*Guiding questions to determine if your program meets the standard.*

- *Why is this program necessary?*
- *Is there clear evidence in your area that this program is needed and sustainable?*
- *What occupations will this degree or certificate assist the student to obtain?*
- *Does the workforce data show that the proposed program is needed?*

*- Can training be provided without creating a new program?"*

We would like to see concrete evidence that these certificates and degrees continue to assist entry level professionals in obtaining employment in the field.

- **Workforce Demand:** Using BurningGlass, BLS Occupation Job Category Growth Projections, and an Occupation Profiles Report, please provide us with a summary of these workforce reports indicating how each stand-alone GRN credential directly serves industry. As much as possible, we expect that this will be an objective summary of data. Please attach the full printout of requested reports.
2. Our data indicate that there were 119 unduplicated students who earned a degree and/or certificate(s) over the past 5 years, and 358 total degree/certificates awarded. This suggests that the majority of GRN students are earning more than one credential in GRN.
    - **Multiple Credentials:** Please provide us with a narrative of the stackability of your certificates and other methods for ensuring that students are not accruing increased credit burden when they opt for multiple credentials.
  3. In the program review presentation, several statements were made by faculty indicating that very low enrolled one-credit classes are the same cost as a four-credit class that is regularly enrolled. While the cost of instruction is reduced based on credit-load, this does not justify running lower enrolled classes. We are responsible for making judicious use of funds provided. We have concerns about guaranteeing course offerings to students without clear data indicating that sections will fill. We ask that you work with your Division Dean to critically analyze course offerings and remove guarantees in the absence of clear data indicating healthy enrollments. The agreed upon district formula and criteria for used for the Online Learning guide should be used to aid in this process. The OL team is prepared to offer you information on the formula and data collection measures they use. You might also consider a discussion of whether a cohort model would assist you in more effectively meeting student course needs and ensuring robust enrollment.
    - **Scheduling Proposal:** We ask that you submit a revised proposal for an annual schedule of offerings. The goal is to support degree/certificate completion while also maintaining robust course enrollments. You will need to develop your proposed annual schedule based on prior enrollment data (using the agreed upon

district formula and specific criteria/guidelines used for the Online Learning planning guide). Please note that #4 and #5 below might have a direct impact on your proposed scheduling system, resulting in the reduction or elimination of lower enrolled courses that are not directly related to industry demands.

4. One student in the program review presentation mentioned, “I had so many squirrel moments because they have so much to offer.” We recognize that while having so much to offer may be enticing, national data suggest that an abundance of offerings can create a greater credit-burden on students or may increase risk of non-completion for some students. While we recognize considerable efforts to streamline offerings over the past year, we ask that you work with your Division Dean to continue to critically analyze offerings and find ways to simplify pathways and decrease credit burden on students. This includes a more in-depth analysis of certificate offerings.
  - **Course and Certificate Offerings:** Using workforce data requested in item #1, please provide a thoughtful analysis of your course and certificate offerings, indicating how you intend to further simplify pathways.
5. We appreciate the customized approach to student advising, but recognize that this is not a sustainable model. As we move through the college Advising Redesign initiative, we aim to address all students’ advising and guidance needs (see response to your recommendation focused on advising below). In preparation for this work, we ask that you consider ways to reduce the complexity of your advising model and program maps and how to effectively partner with professional advisors for impactful and sustained student support. A key support for students – and the advisors that support them – will be the creation of easy to navigate degree/certificate pathway maps, with clear and stackable curriculum elements.
  - **Sustainable and Student-Centered Advising:** Please prepare for connecting with the Advising Program Manager and engaging in opportunities in the near future for your program faculty to partner with advising on developing a transition plan for sustainable and impactful advising for your program. Begin to develop program advising tools, as cited above. Please work with your Division Dean liaison and the Manager of the Advising Program to engage in this work.

6. We note that you are requiring a very high number of internship credits (10 credits/300 hours). We ask that you work with your Division Dean to explore whether this credit-load is standard to certificate and AAS programs of this kind.
  - **Internship:** Please provide a summary of how your program compares to discipline and college-wide standards regarding internship credits for Associate degree and certificate programs.
7. In line with the college's commitment to YESS, we ask that you review your completion data. Are there equity gaps in completion (gender, race/ethnicity, age, pell, etc.)? The college is soon to release a tool for easily assessing YESS metrics within programs.
  - **YESS Metrics:** Using the college's YESS tools, please provide a short summary of your findings.

We want to underscore that we recognize and appreciate the SAC's deep commitment to student success and high quality education. Our requests mentioned above do not take away from our acknowledgement and appreciation of the incredible efforts of your team.

### **Administrative Response to Recommendations**

**SAC Recommendation:** *Increase gerontology advising support at an equitable and sustainable level (Section 6A)*

- **Response:** We appreciate the efforts and the challenges that your program has faced related to academic advising. As you know, the college is engaged in a multi-year Advising Redesign Initiative to fundamentally change the advising and guidance experience for all students. Implementation has necessarily been phased. We are now at the critical point of addressing the needs of students (and faculty) in programs like yours that have assumed responsibility for academic planning and progress guidance. We aim to shift this model and assure that your students have an assigned professional advisor – part of our broader college advisor practitioner cohort. However, we also aim to design a model in which faculty are partnering with assigned advisors for a more powerful integrated support system for students. We do not have our design confirmed yet. There will be opportunities in the near future for your program faculty to partner with advising on this work and to develop a transition plan for sustainable and impactful advising for your program. Please work with your Division

Dean liaison and the Manager of the Advising Program to engage in this work.

**SAC Recommendation:** *Support the creation of HT lab space: Collaborate with the GRN SAC and its HT Advisory Team to explore ways to build a raised-bed and greenhouse lab space for Horticultural Therapy & Interior Plants section students (Section 6C).*

- **Response:** We are greatly appreciative of the work done to further enhance the HT programming over this program review cycle. These efforts demonstrate an understanding of our responsibility to students to reduce credit burdens and increase access. However, we note that there have only been 8 students who have earned the HT certificate over the past 5 years. Further, our understanding is that creation of HT lab space is quite costly both to build, but more so to maintain over time. Given the very low conferral rate and resource challenges faced by the college, we cannot support this request.

**SAC Recommendation:** *DOI Karen Paez and Dean Dana Fuller: Support strategic scheduling and enrollment flexibility for both GRN only and SOC-PSY/GRN courses to ensure regular offerings of required courses for timely student completion.*

- **Response:** As mentioned above in item #3 and in support of strategic scheduling, we request that you work with your Division Dean to critically analyze enrollment data and develop a new, data-informed model of scheduling.

**SAC Recommendation:** *DOI Karen Paez and Registrar Ryan Clark: Implement financial aid and veterans benefits eligibility for all Gerontology career pathways certificates (See discussion Section 1A and 7E).*

- **Response:** Financial Aid and Veterans approvals are two separate processes.

All of the following are program approved in the VA system:

- Activity Director
- Advanced Behavioral & Cog
- End of Life Care & Support
- Therapy Horticulture
- Group Fitness Leader
- Healthy Older Adult Fitness

We recognize that our Advocacy Certificate is missing from this list. We recommend you....

Financial Aid requires Department of Education approval by program for any non-degree programs. You can see a complete list of approved and not approved programs here:

<https://www.pcc.edu/enroll/paying-for-college/financial-aid/apply/eligible-programs.html>. You'll note that the following GRN credentials are not approved:

- Activity Professional
- Advanced Behavioral & Cognition Care
- Therapy Horticulture
- Group Fitness Leader
- Healthy Older Adult Fitness

Gerontology is not unique in the number of certificates that are not approved by financial aid. There are multiple reasons that the Department of Education does not approve credentials and it is possible that these do not meet stated criteria. Please work with your Division Dean to schedule a meeting with the Director of Financial Aid to determine whether it is possible to petition for approval of these certificates.

**SAC Recommendation:** *Curriculum Office: Assist GRN SAC to establish articulation agreements with WOU Gerontology (BA and ABA) and PSU (BA/BS Health Studies, Aging Services Minor/Concentration) (See Section 7G).*

- **Response:** We ask that you reach out to the Curriculum Office to discuss articulations. Here are some considerations when exploring these possible articulations:
  - WOU Gerontology: It does not appear that a formal articulation agreement is needed, given that the Gerontology major at WOU only requires 2 lower-division courses, one of which (PSY 201A) already transfers to WOU.
  - PSU Health Studies: The BA/BS in Public Health has a "Healthy Aging" concentration option, and there is an "Aging Services Minor". All the required courses in the concentration and the minor are upper-division. Given that, we need to be cautious about creating course substitutions as this could potentially increase the credit burden for our students transferring to PSU and therefore increasing their risk of exhausting financial aid prior to finishing the degree.



It should be noted that both of these schools provide excellent opportunities for PCC to develop transfer pathways to serve our students. These pathways do not need to be formalized by an articulation agreement, but would require some advising and proactive communication with students to support. The Curriculum Office can assist you with details regarding how these pathways can be structured and communicated to students.

**SAC Recommendation:** *Marketing and Outreach: Support the Gerontology program by enhancing our program's outreach and recruitment efforts and collaborate with us on outreach to post-traditional students.*

- **Response:** We have a talented team at PCC to support recruitment and marketing efforts. It is our understanding that your team has met with the Marketing Director and that you have already been collaborating to revise the program website. Marketing is currently developing an advertising plan that will promote all PCC programs so gerontology will certainly be a part of that initiative. Please work with your Division Dean to determine appropriate next steps in collaborating with our Recruitment, Marketing, and Community Relations team members regarding next steps in meeting marketing and outreach goals.

**SAC Recommendation:** *District President & International Education: Get support in addressing the problem for International Students with limits on online courses. It would be helpful to international students who want to pursue Gerontology (and other online programs) got PCC to advocate for change at the national level (through AACC and the US Dept of Education).*

- **Response:** International students are not barred from taking online courses, however, international students, while studying in the United States on F-1 visas, cannot enroll in online programs. They can do so from their home country but not while studying in the US. This is a requirement of the student visa guidelines set by the US Department of State, and is not coordinated by the US Department of Education. AACC's role in international education is to continue to help build lasting partnerships between institutions in the US and institutions abroad, and to advocate for strong global education policy and funding. Advocacy from PCC leadership and/or AACC is not likely to yield changes to the State Department's regulations on online study for international students.

**SAC Recommendation:** *Institutional Effectiveness: With the upcoming implementation of Annual Program Reviews on key enrollment and completion data, we request that Institutional Effectiveness replace GRN data generation with GRNx (GRN and SOC-PSY courses that are GRN courses) as a regular policy.*

- **Response:** Data provided for SAC use in the new program review model is planned to address the need to combine courses from more than one subject area into a single reporting group as Gerontology is requesting. Processes will also be established to ensure that these relationships are current and include any newly approved courses as well.

**SAC Recommendation:** *Support the work of the Flipping Mindsets Project in coordination with the Advising Redesign team, for the benefit of all post-traditional/encore learners across the district.*

- **Response:** Please collaborate with the Advising Program Manager to identify how the tools and concepts being developed in the Flipped Mindset project can be incorporated into the college's onboarding process. Additionally, please work with the Advising Program Manager and Advising Training and Development Coordinator to develop training opportunities around Flipping Mindset for all professional advising staff.

**SAC Recommendation:** *Support age awareness and address ageism as a diversity, equity, and inclusion issue for students, faculty, and staff.*

**SAC Recommendation:** *Endorse PCC Inclusion in the Age-Friendly University Global Network and support collegewide efforts to implement its principles.*

- **Response:** We are very supportive and appreciative of the efforts that the GRN has made to advance PCC in its anti-ageism work. We ask that you work with your Division Dean to reach out to the Office of Equity and Inclusion to explore ways to identify the PCC climate issues and formalize efforts of institutional awareness. In addition, the Teaching Learning Centers may also be an important partner in furthering this important work.

### **Closing**

In closing, we want to again thank the GRN faculty for sharing the results of your program review with us. We are very grateful for the commitment, passion, and dedication you show to your students, discipline, and to PCC. We look forward to supporting your ongoing work and witnessing the continued advancement of your program.

*Administrative Response submitted by Karen Paez, with input from and on behalf of the Deans of Instruction and Dean of Academic Affairs.*

Kendra Cawley, Dean of Academic Affairs

Karen Paez, Dean of Instruction Sylvania Campus

Cheryl Scott, Dean of Instruction Rock Creek Campus

Kurt Simonds, Dean of Instruction Cascade Campus

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*Note:* Division Dean of Social Sciences, Dana Fuller, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Katy Ho, Sylvania Campus President, Lisa Avery, and Dean of Distance Education Loraine Schmitt have also contributed to the responses provided herein. In addition, areas mentioned in the recommendations have weighed in on responses related to their areas.