Graduate Program Report for Health & Human Performance
November 24, 2009

Strengths, commendations:

1. The Interim Department Chair has done commendable work in bringing this report together, and is to be congratulated. The conditions under which he has been called upon for leadership in the department were less than ideal, and circumstances have left him with limited guidance for preparing such a report or for leading this department. His efforts are noteworthy.

2. The program faculty members are dedicated to their students, their department, and this University. The graduate students with whom we visited attested to the professionalism and leadership of these individuals.

3. Faculty members should be commended for level of involvement of program faculty in state and national professional organizations.

4. Faculty members have begun to encourage more students to choose the thesis option, thereby increasing research options for both students and faculty.

5. The faculty does an outstanding job of providing courses for the undergraduate and graduate programs in addition to advising and serving on departmental and university committees. They teach a variety of courses to meet the needs of the Department. In addition, they do an excellent job of mentoring the graduate teaching assistants. Approximately half of the graduate assistants were continuing their degrees because of the encouragement of the faculty to continue their education.

6. With the current lack of resources for research, the faculty members have done a great job of redirecting their research resulting in publications and presentations.

7. Students expressed enthusiasm for faculty mentoring and advisement.

8. Despite overloaded teaching and service obligations, faculty expressed enthusiasm and optimism for the future of their department. They are looking forward to new leadership and direction for their programs.

Program Overview and Vision
The University and the Department have gone through major changes in mission and leadership. With this backdrop, the Department will need to focus their mission and structure to match these changes. A major recommendation is the hiring of an external head who can lead the Department through these changes. The review panel was told by hire administration that a head with research experience would take priority; however, a much wider preferred education and experiences is listed in the advertisement.

The Department has recently changed their masters program to five options for a Master of Science and one option for a Master of Education. The majority of classes are taught on-line or at the Mesquite Metroplex. The Department should streamline the number of tracks offered and examine the impact of delivering courses off campus and on-line as they increase their research emphasis.
Rating: satisfactory. Note this area is fundamental to the future success of the Department which has junior research/teaching faculty in a changing landscape of administrators and mission from teaching to research.

**Faculty Productivity**
The overall faculty productivity is adequate based upon the current teaching load and responsibilities for the undergraduate and graduate programs. The core faculty will need to increase research productivity in view of the new goals of the university. Core faculty show good potential and should prosper if provided good leadership, resources and mentoring. As future positions open, consideration should be given to hiring senior faculty. Currently, there is a small number of core faculty, and none of the current teaching faculty are tenured. Therefore, these non-tenured, core faculty have high teaching loads in combination with a high service obligation. Core faculty is teaching a wide variety of courses and in many different areas that appear outside of their expertise. Junior faculty have limited access to graduate research assistants and established research laboratories.

Faculty express a lack of clarity and confusion in Promotion and Tenure guidelines for the Department. The current faculty has received no external grants, although they have received many internal mini-grants at approximately $600. The faculty has received state outstanding awards for 2 faculty (TAHPERD).

A concern is that the current assistant professors are non-tenured in an environment that was previously teaching oriented to a change to research. There needs to be a systematic transition for current and new hires. The present faculty is doing an outstanding job of teaching, advising, and service to the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Rating: satisfactory for past mission

**Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates**
The quantity of graduate students is commendable based upon the faculty load. The graduate students, on average, accounted for 12% of the total number of majors. The majority of graduate students are part-time, and are teachers seeking a master’s degree for practical and applied purposes. There is a concern that an insufficient number of graduate assistantships are designated as research. Another concern it is approximately half of the students are admitted on conditional/provisional status because of a low GRE/GPA combination. Graduate students reported that they have not gone to professional meetings nor were they aware of funds available to attend. Data was not provided on student academic performance. Insufficient data was provided for placement of graduates and no alumni data was provided from their employers.

Rating: satisfactory

**Curriculum and Programs of Study**
The Department is offering too many degree options, with too many courses with too few faculty. Fewer tracks should be offered with less course options and only courses related
to that emphasis. As noted in their recommendations (page 75), a market analysis and plan of action needs to be done in deciding the on-line program. As the master’s program becomes increasingly online, the Department will need to address how will they integrate “virtual” students with the call for a research agenda.

Rating: satisfactory (would be excellent if a narrowed focus within a couple of tracks)

**Facilities and Resources**
The Department is housed within the Field House and has two research/teaching laboratories: Human Motion Analysis Laboratory and Human Performance Laboratory. At this point, both are basically undergraduate teaching laboratories. The Department has received some equipment for both labs but still needs more to establish a research agenda. The Department’s operating budget has remained the same during the entire reporting period.

Rating: poor primarily due to an aged physical plant and research laboratories which lack the equipment necessary for research agendas of new tenure track faculties.
Recommendations:

1. Personnel:
   a. Hire Department chair; search committee needs to include senior faculty and another department head
   b. At least one of the new positions should be a senior faculty member; junior faculty desperately needs a strong mentor.

2. Program focus:
   a. Reevaluate mission and vision of the department
   b. Develop limited number of programs/tracks specific to the mission
   c. Evaluate the feasibility of on-line vs. face to face instruction

3. Develop a support system
   a. Mentoring faculty and department heads
   b. Flow of information from administration to departments

4. Transitioning phase
   Refocus and redirection of the university’s expectations from a primary emphasis on teaching to an increased emphasis on research must be carefully planned. Current departmental programs have been focused on teaching which impacts the faculty’s load and responsibilities. Student enrollment has also been based upon the past emphasis, i.e. teaching not research.