

**Lehman College**

**Department of Health Sciences**

**Exercise Science Self Study Review and  
Evaluation**

**Prepared by:**

**Dr. Michael G. Miller**

**Western Michigan University, Department of HPHE**

## **Program Review Charge**

Dr. Michael G. Miller was solicited as an outside consultant by the School of Health Sciences of Lehman College to review the Exercise Science Program in late fall of 2020. The program evaluation consisted of reviewing self-study documents, review of the current website for the department, and virtual interviews and conversations with faculty, students of the program, and department and college administrators.

## **Evaluator Qualification Overview**

My background in athletic training, strength and conditioning, and exercise science, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, plus extensive service and research endeavors, and as an accreditor of programs in the aforementioned professional areas has afforded me insight of curricular development, future trends, and analysis of said programs. As such, I reviewed the documents provided by the exercise science program along with interviews of constituents of the program and college to critically examine attributes that are both positive and those that can modified or enriched.

## **Individuals Interviewed**

Dr. Brad Schoenfeld, Graduate Director: Human Performance and Fitness  
Dr. Andrew Alto, Undergraduate Exercise Science Co-Director  
Dr. Douglas Oberlin, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science  
Dr. Gul Tiryaki-Sonmez, Chair, Dept. of Health Sciences  
Dr. Elgoria Harrison, Dean, School of Health Sciences, Human Services and Nursing

## **Program Questions**

The following are questions posed during virtual meetings with program directors, faculty, students, and administrators. These meetings occurred between March 23 – March 29, 2021.

1. What are distinctive attributes about the program?
2. What are the future considerations for the program?
3. What are the limitations/barriers of the program?
4. How do you determine student success in your program?
5. How are student internships managed?
6. Who are the main benefactors of the program?
7. Is there adequate release time for faculty to complete scholarship requirements for tenure?
8. What are current and future faculty resources?
9. Is there adequate and sufficient space for all research, classroom, and laboratory activities?

## Strengths

After carefully reviewing the documents and virtual sessions with the constituents of the program, several strengths were identified. These are highlights, and not meant to be solely the strengths of the exercise science program.

1. Lehman College, particularly the exercise science program, has established strong ties with the city of Bronx and the state of New York by supporting local businesses, community outreach centers, and the diverse student population and demographics.
2. Students in the exercise science program gain valuable working and learning experiences along with volunteer opportunities during internships to solidify clinical and socialization skills as they prepare to enter the workforce.
3. The exercise science faculty are well respected and world renown in their research and service areas, thereby promoting the recognition of Lehman College, translating to enhanced student recruitment efforts and opportunities for professional and research collaborations.
4. Leadership of both the department and university levels has demonstrated foresight for the growth of the exercise science program and the awareness for ongoing faculty, space, and equipment support.
5. The graduate and undergraduate exercise science program utilizes evidenced based practice embedded in the curriculum for student centered learning experiences, including sport science research (both faculty and students).
6. The exercise science program has a well-equipped laboratory, that serves for research related opportunities and practical application for students as they matriculate through the program.
7. The exercise science program has two concentration areas for students wishing to pursue professional fields of study. These concentration areas boost enrollment to generate more FTE and provide more employment and professional practice opportunities.

## Recommendations

This section summarizes (no order of relevance) the overall recommendations that were supported across multiple data collection components that included self-study materials, virtual interview sessions and review of College and department website.

1. Consider pursuing the National Strength and Conditioning Association accreditation for the CSCS certification and ACSM accreditation for the undergraduate exercise science program. These accreditations will serve as tools for student recruitment and ensure that those who graduate are able to pursue fitness needs and services of the public with the appropriate qualifications.
2. Strongly consider hiring 2-3 additional faculty to better serve the instructional needs of the exercise science program, which currently has a high student to faculty ratio. Less reliance of adjuncts can ensure continuity of course objectives and outcomes and provide the current faculty the opportunity to use their allocated release time to pursue their administrative and scholarship activities. The additional faculty can also serve as an internship coordinator, who can properly supervise, coordinate and document student service and learning activities, especially as enrollment in the exercise science program exponentially increases and also serve as advisors or as lab technicians to adequately operated existing and future laboratory needs.

3. Solicit local businesses to support the exercise science program through gifts or donations for the establishment of student scholarships, particularly from those in which students are associated as part of their internship. Additionally, advocate to Lehman College administrators the necessity of scholarships or financial aid for current and future students to enroll in the exercise science program and attend the college. These funds can assist many non-traditional and foreign students who must find outside employment to meet the financial demands of tuition, living, and other family support obligations.
4. With the notoriety of the senior faculty and their research acumen, encourage procuring grant/funding opportunities, through NSF, Department of Defense, or private entities that can assist with faculty research support, monies for undergraduate student tuition and stipends for research subject participation, and the potential establishment of graduate assistant contracts and services.
5. Consider utilizing web based or remote student learning management systems, to keep current with virtual learning trends and these experiences for students, as this method of educational instruction is becoming standard in society.
6. Utilize other program outcome metrics to objectively evaluate the exercise science program. These can include student retention, job placements, college placements, and program satisfaction, that can highlight the positive attributes of the program and provide other metrics that can be used by Lehman College for accreditation. Moreover, explore collaborations with college officials for identifying and tracking exercise science majors on the metric outcome suggestions.
7. Continue examining the feasibility of a PhD program in exercise science, particularly in strength and conditioning, which reflects the strengths and knowledge areas of current faculty and for promoting lines of research that also reflect these strengths.
8. Consider developing an accelerated master's degree pathways, such as a 4+1 or 3+2 arrangement for the current undergraduate exercise science students wishing to seek post baccalaureate degrees within the department or Lehman College. Not only will this retain students at Lehman College and better prepare them for future employment but also allow better integration of undergraduate and graduate student research experiences and refine course content needs identified by faculty.
9. Develop a method for identifying and evaluating internship placement sites using metrics of site qualifications, student learning experiences, and benchmarks for the exercise science program and that ensures students meet and obtain skills beneficial to their future employment endeavors.
10. Review existing building, classroom, and laboratory spaces to better utilize these resources for the current and future demands of the exercise science program.