



# United States University

Academic Program Review

SELF-STUDY TEMPLATE

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## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### A. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

*Introduce your program. Include its College, Concentrations, and Modalities in which the program is offered; Relationships to other USU programs if applicable. How and when accreditor approval for the program was obtained.*

The Master of Science in Health Sciences (MSHS) aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for effective health services careers and is a part of the College of Health Sciences. The MSHS program began in 2011 and is accredited by Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC). Through learning activities directed towards achieving learning outcomes focused on communication, change, informatics, critical thinking, ethics, diversity, team-work, and knowledge, the program prepares the graduate for careers in health administration and promotes educational opportunities for career advancement, employment mobility, and lifelong learning opportunities.

The Master of Science in Health Sciences (MSHS) program includes an on-ground, 36 semester credit program that is designed to span four semesters or 16 months. MSHS program offers two Masters degrees, Masters of Science in Health Sciences in Health Care Administration and Masters of Science in Health Sciences in Health Education. Successful completion of the Masters of Science Health Sciences in Health Education grants eligibility for the graduate to take the National Certification of Health Educators Exam (CHES).

### B. PROGRAM MISSION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

*List the program learning outcomes and describe how they were developed; include any alignment with related educational organizations (e.g., programmatic accreditors, other national/international organizations related to the course content area). Describe relation to Institutional Mission, Vision, Values, and Outcomes. (How does this program mission align and further the mission of USU? How do Program Learning Outcomes align with USU's Institutional Learning Outcomes?). If an undergraduate program, how do the program's learning outcomes align with the core competencies required by WSCUC?*

United States University (USU) was founded in 1997 with a focus on providing the underserved Hispanic and Latino communities in Southern California with a unique college environment that provides rigorous academic programs with personal attention. The University mission, college mission, institutional learning outcomes (ILO), and MSHS program learning outcomes (PLO) align to ensure congruency between the University, College and MSHS program. The MSHS program PLOs include core outcome threads of communication, change, information, critical thinking, ethics, diversity, teamwork and collaboration, and knowledge. PLOs are available in Appendix A. See Table 1.1, *Crosswalk of Missions and Outcomes*.

Table 1.1. Crosswalk of Missions and Outcomes.

USU Mission	Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO)	Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
<p><b>Professional and personal educational opportunities</b>, with a special outreach to <b>underserved groups</b> through campus and online courses, the University offers <b>affordable, relevant and accessible</b> undergraduate and graduate degree programs and certificates in a <b>supportive student-centered learning environment (USU Catalog, p. 10)</b></p>	<p>Work effectively <b>across race, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation (ILO 6)</b></p>	<p>Propose health intervention strategies responsive to <b>diverse cultural and social values (PLO 5)</b></p>
	<p>Demonstrate <b>ethical</b> reasoning and actions to provide leadership as a <b>socially responsible citizen (ILO 5)</b></p>	<p>Apply <b>ethical</b> concepts and demonstrate <b>responsible</b> conduct when faced with dilemmas in a real world context <b>(PLO 4)</b></p>
	<p><b>Communicate</b> clearly and effectively through writing, speaking and using technology <b>(ILO 1)</b></p>	<p>Utilize effective verbal, nonverbal and written <b>communication</b> skills to inform, educate and empower targeted audiences <b>(PLO 1)</b></p>
	<p>Exhibit mastery of <b>knowledge</b> and skills within a discipline <b>(ILO 8)</b></p>	<p>Display a rich and thorough understanding of skills, <b>knowledge</b>, theories, and issues that comprise the discipline <b>(PLO 7)</b></p>
	<p>Apply <b>critical thinking</b> in the research and problem-solving process <b>(ILO 4)</b></p>	<p>Engage in inductive and deductive reasoning, analysis and <b>decision-making</b> in a variety of health situations <b>(PLO 3)</b></p>
	<p>Apply <b>quantitative reasoning</b> to address complex changes <b>(ILO 2)</b></p>	<p>Design, conduct and interpret meaningful health science-related <b>research</b> and scholarly activity <b>(PLO 2)</b></p>
	<p>Effectively gather, analyze and integrate <b>information</b> from a variety of sources <b>(ILO 3)</b></p>	<p>Exhibit <b>technological</b> proficiency in gathering and using <b>information</b> to address issue and take action <b>(PLO 8)</b></p>
	<p>Work <b>collaboratively</b> as members and leaders of diverse <b>teams (ILO 7)</b></p> <p>(USU Catalog, 2016, p. 10)</p>	<p>Foster positive relationships and <b>collaborate</b> with a variety of target groups (individuals, colleagues, families, local community members, etc.) in order to promote and enhance the health of the community <b>(PLO 6)</b></p> <p>(USU Catalog, 2016, p. 70)</p>

## C. PROGRAM HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES SINCE LAST REVIEW

*Present a brief history of the program and describe any changes since the last program review (if relevant). Document the approval of these changes.*

In 2012, the academic colleges were restructured by the previous leadership. The College of Health Sciences was absorbed and renamed the College of Arts and Sciences . The College presently has two programs in the undergraduate and graduate level. In order to address the strategic directions of the University which is geared towards academic quality, financial sustainability and accessibility, the Dean, core faculty, and staff of the college are requesting for the name of the college to reverse to the College of Health Sciences. The three divisions in the College will be known as the Division of General Studies, Division of Science and Health Studies, and the Division of Graduate Studies.

### Division of General Studies

Task: To assist students of all backgrounds and experiences in completing the general education coursework that provides them with the foundational skills and the exposure to a range of disciplinary approaches requisite for a bachelor’s-level education. The Division of General Studies serves undergraduate students in the Health Sciences, Nursing, and Business Administration programs.

### Division of Science and Health Studies- Kamal Gandhi, PhD

Task: It offers bachelor completion and post-baccalaureate programs for students who have decided to pursue nursing and other allied health professions lacking the required science/health sciences courses. An individualized program of study will be developed to meet the needs of the students.

### Division Chair of Graduate Level Studies- Mirjana Zivkovic , PhD, MD

Task: To guide students in obtaining a quality graduate education and real-world experiences. Critical thinking and leadership in the health professions are the core skills emphasized.

Since the initiation of the MSHS program, no other significant programmatic or curriculum changes have been made.

## II. PROGRAM ACADEMIC QUALITY

### A. STUDENTS

*Discuss student demographics. What is the demographic composition (gender, ethnicity, age) of students enrolled in this program in the fall of the review year? How do these demographic characteristics align with the mission and values of USU? Discuss other indicators related to mission/vision/values.*

The United States University Mission states “Professional and personal educational opportunities, with a special outreach to underserved groups through campus and online courses” (United States University Catalog, 2016, p. 10). Comparison of MSHS student demographics to the census of San Diego County mirrors this mission. Using 2015 Fall 1 student census data compared to San Diego County population data and the student demographics of California State Universities, it is demonstrated that, in fact, USU

over-represents minority and international students as targeted by the University mission for underserved populations. See Table 2.1, *2015 Student Demographics Comparison*.

Table 2.1. MSHS 2015 Student Demographics Comparison.

	USU MSHS (%)	California State Universities* (%)	San Diego County** General Population (%)
Asian	7.4%	12.1%	12.1%
Black	21.4%	4.2%	5.6%
Hispanic	7.1%	36.9%	33.4%
White	0	25.8%	76.1%
Two or more	0	4.6%	4.3%
Nonresident/International	60.7%	6.6%	N/A
Not specified	3.6%	5.2%	N/A
Pacific Islander	N/A	0.3%	0.6%
American Indian	N/A	0.3%	1.3%
Filipino	N/A	4.1%	N/A
Gender Ratio (M/F)	65% Female	56% Female	
Average age (mean)	34 years	23.4 years	

\*CSU Systemwide Enrollment (2015). Retrieved from [http://www.calstate.edu/as/stat\\_reports/2015-2016/feth01.htm](http://www.calstate.edu/as/stat_reports/2015-2016/feth01.htm)

\*\*US Census, San Diego County, California (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06073>

It must be noted that the USU cohort size is small, making statistical comparison more difficult; however, despite the small numbers, it is evident that in USU serves minority and international students true to the USU mission statement and has done so throughout the program's history. MSHS data tables for enrollment, retention and graduation can be found in Appendix B.

## B. CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

### 1. CURRICULUM MAP

*Describe the curriculum map (include map as an appendix) and how the curriculum addresses the learning outcomes; Describe the levels of achievement expected at different levels of student progress through the program.*

Curriculum map for the MSHS program is provided in Appendix C. The map outlines the core curriculum courses as the progress through the program. The program learning objectives are represented and

staggered throughout the program as they are introduced in MHS 500 and 502, further developed mid curriculum, and mastered in the final course MHS 599.

The introduction, development, and mastery of the courses are leveled using appropriate taxonomy that requires students to understand basic knowledge, then progressing towards comprehension and application, to the analysis and evaluation towards the synthesis course. This will be detailed in section II. B. 3. *Scaffolding*.

## 2. COMPARISON TO SIMILAR PROGRAMS AND/OR ASPIRANT PROGRAMS

*As appropriate, discuss your curriculum in comparison to curriculum of selected other institutions and/or disciplinary/professional standards.*

Two schools, California State University-Northridge and Grand Canyon University, were compared to the MSHS program for program length, delivery method, and availability of specialty or certificate. These schools were chosen to compare and contrast a local public school and a national for-profit school. A side by side comparison can be viewed in Table 2.2, *Program Comparison*.



Table 2.2. Program Comparison.

	USU	Cal State-Northridge	Grand Canyon Univ.
Type of School	Proprietary	Public	Proprietary
Degree Granted	Master of Science in Health Sciences	Master of Science in Health Science	Master of Science in Health Administration
Delivery Method	On ground, weekend	On ground, eve	Online, eve
Estimated time for degree completion	4 semesters, 16 months	2-4 years	25 months
Credit Breakdown			
Pre-requisites	6 semester credits	N/A	
Core	24 semester credits	36 units/24 sem credits	48 semester credits
Specialty	Healthcare Administration 12 or Health Education 12	National Healthcare Administration 9 units/ 6 sem credits or International Healthcare Administration 9 units/6 sem credits	N/A
Culminating Experience		2-3 units/ 1.3-1.5 sem credits	
Total	42 semester credits	47-48 units/39-40 sem credits	48 semester credits
Eligible for National Certification	Yes	No	No

California State University-Northridge. (2016). *California State University-Northridge Catalog 2016-2017*. Retrieved from <http://catalog.csun.edu/academics/hsci/programs/ms-health-administration/>

Grand Canyon University (2015). *Grand Canyon University Catalog 2015-2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.gcu.edu/Documents/Academic-Catalog/2015-2016-Fall-Academic-Catalog.pdf>

Grand Canyon University (2017). *Masters of Science in Healthcare Administration: Program details*. Retrieved from <https://www.gcu.edu/degree-programs/master-science-health-care-administration>

As demonstrated in Table 2.2, USU MSHS program is very similar in total credit length and delivery method to the comparison programs. USU offers program that is shorter in expected time to complete the degree than other programs. The unique pedagogy of the University and program, along with

various types of student support allow the MSHS program to offer comparable programs to underserved, non-traditional students, per the University Mission, while achieving academic success in a shorter timeframe. An in-depth discussion of pedagogy and student services aimed to serve the unique challenges of the underserved student population will be discussed in Section II. B. 5 Learning Modalities and Preferences. It should be noted that the national for-profit school does offer online delivery modalities, while neither the non-profit or USU MSHS offer online courses at this time. This may be a consideration for future changes for the MSHS program to maintain competitiveness in the market.

Other areas to highlight for the MSHS program in comparison to the two selected programs is the offering of two specializations, similar to the public school. Finally, a unique benefit to the MSHS program is the eligibility for national certification for Master in Health Education. Neither compared school offers this feature.

### 3. SCAFFOLDING

*Describe how the program assures that student progress is sequential and cumulative. How does the program facilitate students enrolling in courses in which initial achievement in an outcome is expected prior to enrolling in courses in which higher levels of achievement are expected.*

USU MSHS curriculum is organized using the MSHS Program Learning Outcomes. The curriculum map illustrates how each PLO is introduced, developed, and mastered through the cumulative core courses. A sampling of examples of the introduction, development, and mastery are shown in Table 2.3, *Sampling of Scaffolding through the Curriculum*. All MSHS PLOs can be found in Appendix A and the Curriculum Map is available in Appendix C.

Table 2.3. Sampling of Scaffolding through the Curriculum.

PLO	Introduction	Development	Mastery
<b>Mastery of Knowledge:</b> <b>Display a rich and thorough understanding of skills, knowledge, theories, and issues that comprise the discipline.</b>	<i>MHS 500: Health Through the Lifespan.</i> CLO: <u>Recognize and promote the interventions and strategies that will improve overall health and well-being,</u> reduce morbidity and mortality throughout the major stages of life including pregnancy, childhood and adolescence and improve and promote sexual and reproductive health, as well as an active and healthy aging over the life course	<i>MHS 510: Mental Health and Society.</i> CLO: <u>Analyze different paradigms of mental health and disorders,</u> as well as the response of various societies to mentally ill.	<i>MHS 518: Global Health.</i> CLO: <u>Analyze the global burden of disease</u>
<b>Quantitative Reasoning:</b> <b>Design, conduct and interpret meaningful health science-related research and scholarly activity</b>	<i>MHS 500: Health Through the Lifespan.</i> CLO: Compare and contrast the different approaches to life-span and developmental dimensions in the analysis of age/development/life course trends, and <u>understand the current major theoretical and empirical research contributions and definitions</u> from the field of health and well-being over the life-span of humans.	<i>MHS 508: Research</i> CLO: <u>Critique published health education and health science research.</u>	<i>MHS 599: Capstone Integrative Project.</i> CLO: <u>Define topic and formulate research question. Plan the study and write the method. Analyze and present the results of work and write the results section.</u>
<b>Written and Oral Communication:</b> <b>Utilize effective verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills to inform, educate and empower targeted audience</b>	<i>MHS 502: Health Promotion, Program Planning, Design, and Evaluation.</i> CLO: <u>Write a program’s mission statement, goals, and objectives,</u> and identify strategies and interventions for the health promotion plan.	<i>MHS 512: Health Services Program Administration.</i> CLO: <u>Use communication strategies critical to facilitate cooperation among stakeholders</u>	<i>MHS 599: Capstone Integrative Project.</i> CLO: <u>Plan the study and write the method. Analyze and present the results of work and write the results section. Write discussion and conclusion</u>

#### 4. INTEGRATION

*Describe how the courses in your program provide students with the opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills, and how achievement of integration is evaluated.*

Students are expected to integrate knowledge and skills through careful educational delivery arranged in a simple to complex manner as the student progresses through the program and a variety of educational activities. Such activities are diversified to maximize learning for all types of student learners. Course objectives are presented via lectures and are derived from written resources such as textbooks and peer-reviewed journals. Topics and learning are reinforced through learning activities such as discussions, presentations, peer reviews, literature reviews, and development of research questions. Course syllabi (Appendix D) provide a review of assigned activities, while, activities are supplemented at the faculty's discretion as needed and indicated by the class' learning needs. Evaluation methods are also diversified and include both rubrics for qualitative work and objective methods for multiple choice-style methods. A sample of learning activities can be found below in Table 2.4, *Sampling of Activities and Evaluation Methods per Course*.

Table 2.4. Sampling of Activities and Evaluation Methods per Course.

Course	CLO	Learning Activity	Evaluation/Grading
MHS 500	Identify the impact of conception, early life and changes throughout human development	Weekly discussions	Rubric
MHS 504	Apply appropriate models for assessing cultural competence and diversity in order to develop effective strategies to reduce disparities	Application of learning through case study	Rubric
MHS 508	Develop a design for a health research program	Conduct a literature review	Rubric
MHS 512	Differentiate fiscal resources in health education	Quizzes based on weekly content	Multiple choice and/ or short answer question
MHS 599	Analyze and present the results of their work and write the results section	Prepare and present final capstone paper to peers and Graduation Committee	Rubric

#### 5. LEARNING MODALITIES AND PREFERENCES

*Describe the pedagogical approach to addressing various learning modalities and learning preferences.*

USU's mission to target underserved learners is represented in the MSHS unique pedagogy and learning modalities. USU offers a varied learning setting that is aimed to meet a wide variety of student needs in attempt to further reduce barriers that this population may experience while achieving higher education. Courses are delivered in short, eight week sessions, organized into eight modules, divided to

address one module each week. This design is easily implemented for on-ground, online, and weekend courses although the MSHS program is not currently offered online. However, this current design does allow for a more seamless transition to online delivery in the future. Each module represents one or more course objectives (CLO) that are specifically oriented to address the introduction, development, or mastery of a MSHS program learning objective (PLO).

The courses are taught in eight modules consisting of lectures, required readings, discussions, quizzes and written assignments designed by the individual faculty to apply and amplify student learning as it applies to course objectives. Each course also requires a signature assignment that requires the students to apply cumulative course knowledge in a professional, written format.

Weekend, on campus meetings that meet on one Saturday and Sunday each month are offered. These sessions allow for direct, face to face, interaction between faculty and students, further fostering a supportive learning environment. On campus activities promote learning through faculty and student/peer presentations, direct faculty feedback, case studies, group work, role playing, problem solving.

## 6. STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

*Describe how student evaluations of courses are used in assessing academic quality. What are the results of the most recent course evaluations in your program? (Use at least the previous term's data, but you may include additional information from prior terms.) Describe any changes made in your program as the result of these evaluations.*

Student course satisfaction surveys are distributed electronically through email and address four major components of the course: content, student experience, instructor evaluation, and technology/accessibility. Results of the surveys are utilized to make key changes to enhance the academic quality and student experience.

The MSHS enjoys a high student satisfaction rate in all four above mentioned categories. For review, the following calendar year of 2016 results have been compiled. During this year, all six academic terms were surveyed (Spring I, II, Summer I, II, Fall I, II) during all courses administered totaling 16 courses (MHS 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 507, 508, 510, 512, 513, 514, 515, 518, 599, and 999). For this year, the program has a response rate between 42.86% and 100% for the above named courses, with a mean average of 73.5% for the cumulation of the courses during the full year. Refer to Table 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 for survey items and results. Full satisfaction data can be found in Appendix E, *Student Course Satisfaction*.

Table 2.5. Student Satisfaction: Course Content.

<b>COURSE CONTENT ITEMS</b>		-5
1	Course objectives and learning outcomes clearly described	4.58
2	Textbook and materials were relevant to the course	4.43
3	Course content, assignments, and exams were aligned with course objectives	4.54
4	Grading criteria were systematic, clear, and nonarbitrary	4.53
<b>AVG</b>		<b>4.52 of 5</b>

Table 2.6. Student Satisfaction: Student Experience.

<b>STUDENT EXPERIENCE ITEMS</b>		0-5
1	This course has improved my ability to think critically about the topic	4.55
2	This course has increased my confidence about applying what I have learned	4.55
3	This course has taught me how to continue to increase my knowledge of the subject	4.55
<b>AVG</b>		<b>4.55 of 5</b>

Table 2.7. Student Satisfaction: Instructor Evaluation.

<b>INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION ITEMS</b>		0-5
1	Instructor was well prepared, organized, and stimulated my interest in the learning subject	4.62
2	Instructor had expert knowledge of the subject matter	4.65
3	Instructor presented material in an engaging manner that facilitated my learning	4.59
4	Instructor encourages diverse points of view	4.58
5	Instructor was available to answer questions and provide timely feedback	4.66
<b>AVG</b>		<b>4.62 of 5</b>

Table 2.8. Student Satisfaction: Technology and Accessibility.

<b>TECH/ACCESSIBILITY ITEMS</b>		0-4
1	Rating of Brainfuse	3.67
2	If you experienced difficulty or had a question about accessing or navigating your online course/course component, how easy was it to obtain assistance	3.43
3	How effective was the online experience in facilitating your understanding of the course material	3.31
4	Please rate the usefulness of online discussions in this course	3.4
<b>AVG</b>		<b>3.45 of 4</b>

The MSHS program relates such consistent and high satisfaction rates with courses to the unique pedagogy that serves the USU student, the exceptional quality of faculty with real-life experiences, and various types of student support that is available.

Also contributing to satisfaction is the swift intervention to student needs or concerns voiced by students. Although a formal and systematic process for collecting student input is consistently completed as previously explained, the Division Chair of the program works closely with the faculty, Dean, and students to identify any concern, including the course content, textbook, or concerns with instruction.

Finally, feedback is used to systematically make changes to the program. A recent example of positive change as a result of student feedback received regarding MHS 599, *Capstone Integrative Project*. Students and faculty reported difficulty completing a satisfactory thesis in an eight week module. Hence, based on collaboration with the faculty and Dean, the program began incorporating appropriately matched learning activities in MHS 508, *Research in Health Sciences* in order to allow the student to begin researching the thesis topic. Subsequently, students can continue and complete the research process in MHS 599. This allows the student more specific instruction and application time towards completing the capstone project. To further support this change, the program elected to update the textbook as well. This change is very recent and continues to be monitored for effectiveness.

## 7. CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING EXPERIENCES

*As applicable, describe co-curricular learning experiences and student participation in them.*

The MSHS program does not have co-curricular learning activities.

## C. STUDENT LEARNING AND SUCCESS

### 1. LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

*Discuss learning outcomes assessment for your program. Include annual results of direct and indirect assessment (include annual assessment reports in appendix). Describe the assessment process: how are program learning outcomes assessed? (Include a schedule showing which PLOs are scheduled for assessment in which year, which indicates review of all PLOs within a five-year cycle). Describe ongoing efforts by the department to respond to assessment results; what changes were made in the assessment process or in courses to improve results? (If results of any learning outcome assessment are completed prior to the final draft of this self-study, adjust this section to include those results as well.)*

USU MSHS program acknowledges the importance of performing systematic and ongoing evaluation of PLOs to ensure outcomes are being met and identify any areas needing improvement. The process of assessing PLOs includes a yearly assessment of two of eight PLOs are evaluated. This results in each PLO being reviewed every four years, which exceeds the University expectation of a five year cycle.

Rubrics are tools specifically created and utilized to evaluate PLOs. Due to the MSHS program being new, the program has the opportunity to develop a well-fitted tool that effectively measures each PLO. Rubrics are first drafted by the Associate Provost, then distributed to a small sampling of faculty. Faculty then use the drafts to evaluate student culminating assignments that represent the learning objective.

Once evaluated, the faculty then collaborate to streamline grading, then finalize the tool. This “norming session” is performed for each PLO rubric created.

For PLO evaluation, samples of student work are collected for evaluation that represent a specific PLO. Samples can include written work and/or taped student activities such as presentation. These samples are distributed via email or personally and graded by two individuals. These individuals are faculty from either the MSHS program or another department. Faculty who have taught the specific course are not evaluators in this process. Using the rubric, the student work is evaluated. This process can take several days to complete.

The Division Chair is then given the scores for compilation. An Institutional Researcher is utilized to assist in data analysis and is consulted prior to finalizing the written results. This process is rigorous through detailed statistical analysis. The full report can be reviewed in Appendix F, *PLO Assessment and Cycles*. The overall results are distributed to the faculty and Dean via email, personal communication and telephone. In an informal format, discussions of the results ensue, with faculty asked for recommendations for improvement. Once input has been received, the Division Chair selects a plan of action that is based on faculty feedback, administrative feedback, feasibility, and professional experience. This planned changes are then distributed throughout the program through, again, personal communication, telephone, and email. For future assessment, it may be beneficial to form planned changes into measurable goals and assign roles to increase efficacy and efficiency in change.

Because of the small department size, the program works as a committee of the whole. This small size allows for frequent and engaging communication between both the administration of the program and the faculty, which is noted as a strength of the program. With that said, despite much informal discussion for program improvement, many of these unceremonious discussions are not documented, resulting in few meeting minutes. This is an area of improvement that the program has identified as the program continues to progress.

The most recently evaluated PLO occurred in 2015-2016, PLO #1: *Written and Oral Communication*. Note the full report of the previous PLO evaluations and cycle can be found in Appendix F, *PLO Assessment and Cycles*. Using the process described above, it was identified that the students had scored lower than the originally set benchmark. After review of the scores, the Dean, Division Chair, and faculty concurred the original benchmark had been set unrealistically high and was since decreased to a more realistic level. Additionally, the MSHS program acted to make changes to increase student performance in this identified area of communication. Specifically, the committee identified the sampling of student work included a high majority of international students. The committee recognized a common barrier related to the English language rather than the knowledge level of the PLO. As a result of collaboration from the MSHS faculty and administration, it was proposed that a Writing Center be implemented, specific for non-native English speakers. Although not yet implemented, the University is currently in the process of completing and will be reevaluated in four years.

## 2. STUDENT RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATE TRENDS

*Discuss retention and graduation rate trends (disaggregated). What are the implications of these trends? What measures have been implemented to address concerns (if any)?*

The MSHS program is dedicated to student success, thus, systematically evaluates student progress through retention and graduate rate trends. The Division Chair, in collaboration with the Dean of Health Sciences, and Assistant Provost for Institutional Research, monitor student retention data to identify



trends. Changes are made in collaboration with the faculty and administration to implement changes as needed.

### Retention

Retention, in the University, is referred to as *persistence rates*. Persistence is defined as continued enrollment from the Summer II term to Fall 1 term and excludes students who have previously graduated. The MSHS first cohort was enrolled in 2012, which allows for a full five years of data, organized by cohort with entry or admission dates. Cohort sizes are small, which should be noted for statistical purposes. The overall five year persistence rate is 84%. These cohort groups range from 1 student in 2012 to 24 students in 2015. The highest persistence rate for all five years was 100% (11 of 11) in 2014, and has remained in the 80 percentile for the last two years of 2015 and 2016, demonstrating a consistent rate of retention among students in the program. Table 2.9, *Retention Rates over Five Years*, demonstrates the trends below. Data can also be viewed in Appendix B, *MSHS Outcome Data*.

Table 2.9. Retention and Graduation Rates over Five Years.

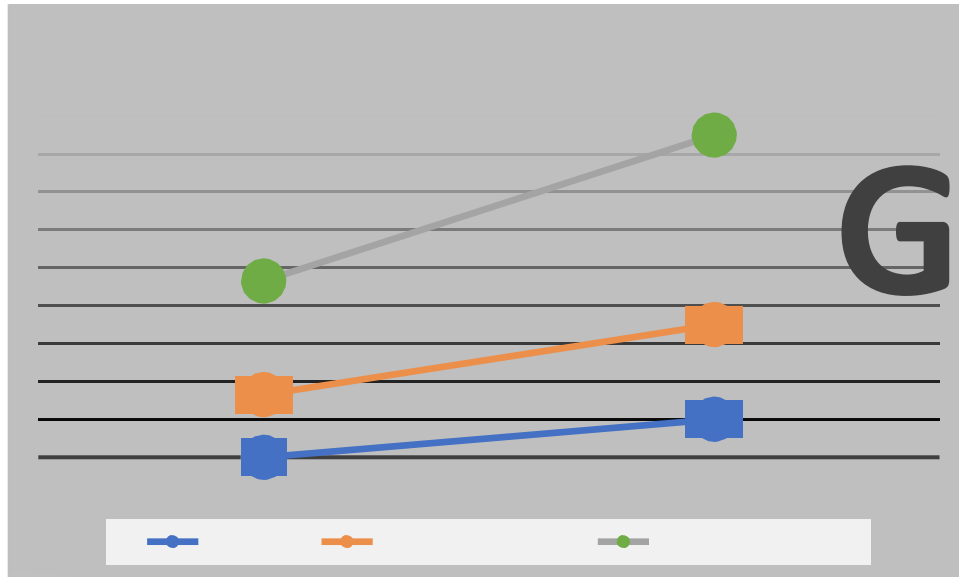


### Graduation

Graduation rates are monitored closely, mirroring the same procedure as retention. Graduation rates are measured on three scales: on time, less than 150% of the program time, and more than 150% of the program time. A natural result of a recently implemented program as this is a lack of vast data. The MSHS program is scheduled to span 16 months. With the first cohort enrollment date of Fall 2012, graduation data exists only for 2013, 2014, and partial data for 2015 calendar years. Further affecting statistical rates are the small cohort numbers. Existing data, however, does demonstrate positive trends. Graduation rates for less than 150% of the program time include two data points from 33% (2 of 4) in 2013 to and increased 50% (1 of 2) in 2014. Time elapsed does not allow for 150% calculations for 2015. Similarly, an increased trend is seen in on-time graduation, with partial data in 2015. In 2013, 0 students graduated on time, increasing to 20% in 2014. Trending rates for completed cohort years of

2013-2014 are shown in Table 2.10, *Graduation Rates for 2013-2014 Cohorts*. Data can also be viewed in Appendix B, *MSHS Outcome Data*.

Table 2.10. Graduation Rates for 2013-2014 Cohorts.



Again, it must be noted that cohort sizes and lack of annual data exists and may influence results. However, trends available show very promising success by students in the program. And although, the optimal result would be on-time or graduation within time and a half of the program, it should be recognized that both cohorts boast a high graduation rate of 60% in 2013 and 100% in 2014.

The MSHS program feels these results illuminate the dedication to the mission of the school to target students in underserved populations, specifically international or minority students. As these students often face additional barriers, USU offers a pedagogy of modular eight week courses. This type of pedagogy allows for personal time that may be required, away from the academic setting; hence, USU's generous leave of absences policies for domestic students as well as a specific international student policy for unique issues that may arise.

While noting such barriers, it may be prudent to consider an online option for future program changes to further increase accessibility and reduce barriers, especially in light of the high technological capabilities and student satisfaction in these area. In terms of our mission, the program believes graduation rates are a reflection of the success for this target population.

The program goal is to continuously improve rates with each cohort. Consequently, these results are routinely monitored by the administration as described, then, collaboration with faculty is initiated. Through information and formal communication via personal discussion, small group discussion, telephone, and email, the department makes changes to improve the program. One example can be found with the developing idea of improving written and oral communication with a dedicated Writing Center for non-native English speakers as described previously in Section II. C. 2, Learning Outcomes Assessment.

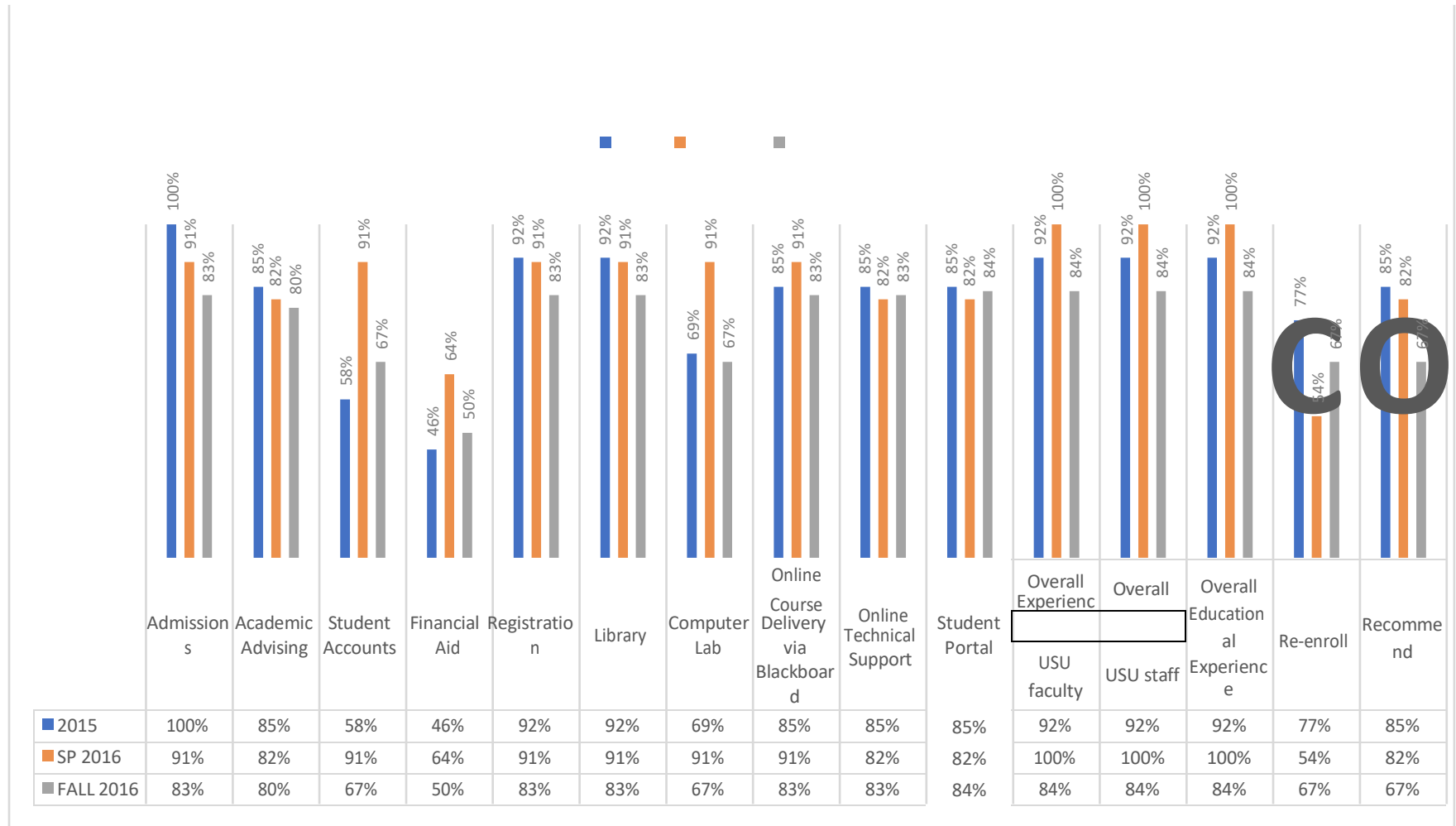
### 3. STUDENT SATISFACTION

*Provide information here on the results of the most recent student satisfaction survey from students in your program. How have these affected program activity? Discuss the results of graduating student satisfaction surveys and/or alumni satisfaction surveys as available.*

Similar to student course satisfaction, MSHS program students report an overall high satisfaction of the overall program and University. Using the "Overall Educational Experience", students' latest satisfaction score is 84%, from Fall 2016. This overall satisfaction is measured bi-annually, includes 15 items that measures satisfaction of all major ancillary departments: Academic faculty, University staff, Admissions, Academic Advising, Student Accounts, Financial Aid, Registration, Library, and Computer Lab. The tool also measures satisfaction with Blackboard, technical support, the student portal, likeliness to recommend, and the likeliness to re-enroll if had the opportunity.

Three data points are available and include groups of 13, 11, and 6 respondents over 2015, Spring 2016, and Fall 2016. Again, it should be noted the size of the sample are small, which may skew findings. Unfortunately, the sample numbers decrease over time, potentially further skewing the data. However, satisfaction trends remain fairly steady demonstrating the highest satisfaction with the overall experience, USU faculty, and staff rating 84% either satisfied or highly satisfied. The lowest satisfaction being the Financial Aid department. Although lower than desired, it has increased from the 2015 satisfaction rating of 46%. Table 2.11, *MSHS Overall Student Satisfaction*, demonstrates all department levels of satisfaction among MSHS students over the past two years.

Table. 2.11. MSHS Overall Student Satisfaction.



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#### 4. JOB PLACEMENTS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

*Discuss job placement information and student achievements as available.*

The University does not participate in job placement, therefore does not have data available to track graduate employment.

The program does collect anecdotal information on graduates on their success as faculty and administrators may continue to provide references or mentorship after graduation. One anecdotal story of success is provided by a MSHS graduate, collected through an email, to support the program review process. This graduate's quoted comment is below:

United States University is an institution which encourages progress and academic excellence amidst cultural diversity. I chose the university due to its student focused approach, flexible schedules, affordable tuition and vibrant influence.

The university offers lectures and courses that are appealing and academically stimulating. The acquired knowledge can be applied to real-world case studies, which is extremely critical. I was taught by internationally renowned experts in their field, enriched by their research-led approach, and their constant encouragement to brainstorm innovative ideas within small class sizes.

The very international nature of students in the course has also been a major plus both in terms of making new friends from different countries and cultures to actually helping understanding modules. The international perspective offered me an invaluable experience to add on the value elements to my career journey in the global community.

#### D. FACULTY

##### 1. FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

*Describe faculty qualifications and expertise. Include terminal degree proportion, list of faculty specialties within the discipline (and alignment to program curriculum), and any other academic quality indicators (e.g., external funding awarded to faculty, record of professional practice, service awards and recognition, etc.). (Include current vitae of core faculty in an appendix.)*

For the 2016 academic year, six faculty members and two administrators, the Dean and Division Chair, represented the eight teaching members of the MSHS program. Of the eight members, seven have terminal degrees (87.5%) with one graduate prepared faculty member with a Master's in Business Administration. The faculty represent a diverse group of expertise and experience ranging from four of eight (50%) in health related degrees such as Medical Doctors, Epidemiologist, and Doctoral of Health Sciences, two of eight (25%) in law, and the remaining two of eight (25%) in business. Please note the experiences in discipline and teaching in Table 3.3. *Faculty expertise.*

The MSHS boasts a dynamic and impressive collection of experience and expertise. Faculty curriculum vitae can be found in Appendix G, *Faculty CV*. For the eight teaching members of the MSHS program, there is a collective 150.5 years of teaching with 153 years of professional experience. On average, this

equals 18-19 years of experience per teaching faculty. The faculty boast a wide variety of accolades including holding prestigious positions such as President of the Serbian Association of Social Medicine to Chief Operating Officer of the Cancer Coping Center of San Diego. Within the ranks, the faculty have been published 21 times, with multiple speaking engagements noted throughout the compiled CVs. Please review the Appendix G, *Faculty CV*, for more detailed and individual description of the experience of the MSHS faculty.

## 2. DIVERSITY OF FACULTY

*Include information on gender and ethnicity of faculty teaching in your program. Do the demographic characteristics of your core and adjunct faculty align with USU's commitment to diversity and the demographic characteristics of the students in your program?*

Eight faculty members teach in the MSHS program and represent a diverse group in both gender and ethnicity, which aligns with the USU commitment to diversity. Of the eight faculty members, four identify as white, two African American, one Asian, and one reporting two or more races. In comparison to national statistics of terminal degrees held by minorities in the United State, USU MSHS once again demonstrates an exception dedication. According to the Council of Graduate Schools, the representation of earned doctoral degrees is significantly less than the retained talent in the MSHS program. See Table 2.12, *Comparison of Faculty Ethnicities with National Earned Minority Doctoral Degrees*. Although the leading majority of teaching faculty are not minority, USU demonstrates an increased ratio in comparison to national representation of terminal degrees. USU will continue the commitment to diversity in future hiring as it collaborates with academic teaching needs and the experience and quality of future candidates.

Table 2.12, Comparison of Faculty Ethnicities with National Earned Minority Doctoral Degrees.

Race/Ethnicity	USU	Nationally Held Terminal Degrees by Minorities in 2014*
White	50%	73%
African American	25%	6.4%
Asian	12.5%	8.5%
2 Races or More	12.5%	2.6%

\*Council of Graduate Schools (2014). Data Sources: Key Takeaways from the 2014 Survey of Earned Doctorates. Retrieved from <http://cgsnet.org/data-sources-key-takeaways-2014-survey-earned-doctorates-0>

## 3. PROSPECTIVE FACULTY EVALUATION

*What is the process of evaluating prospective core and adjunct faculty? How does the program assure that faculty assigned to courses are qualified by education and experience to provide quality instruction?*

The recruitment process for prospective and adjunct faculty is thorough and comprehensive as the search is both internal and external for candidates after a position opening has been identified. With the collaboration of Human Resources, the USU MSHS program utilizes equal opportunity employment practices. The Dean makes a recommendation to the Provost who elects to accept the recommendation

or to return it to the Dean for reconsideration. The full recruitment policy, including the designation of academic rank can be found in Appendix H.

Faculty assignment is multifactorial, with expertise, student need, faculty availability, and consistency within the course considered upon assignment. For example, Dr. Harmon is an epidemiologist and is the consistent faculty member for MSH 508, Research in Health Sciences. The expert colleagues in business, Dr. Coley and Ms. Law, teach MSH 517, Healthcare Financial Management. With 50% of the faculty representing an expertise in healthcare, flexibility is noted in many assignments, while consistency is made a priority to allow for continued improvement upon course delivery. Of the 32 course sections taught in 2016, 22 (68.8%) had been taught in the past by the same faculty member.

### III. PROGRAM VIABILITY

#### A. DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM

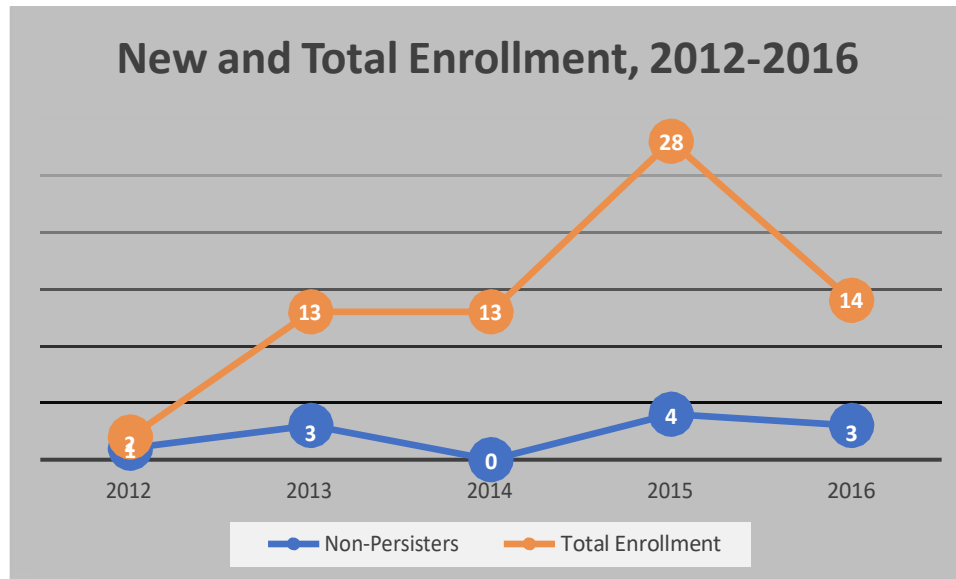
##### 1. ENROLLMENT TRENDS

*What are the total Fall I enrollment trends for the previous 5 years (including the present year)? Is enrollment increasing, decreasing, or holding steady? What are the Fall I NEW enrollment trends for the previous 5 years (including the present year)? Is new enrollment increasing, decreasing, or holding steady? How does the enrollment information provided impact the program's ability to become/remain fiscally sustainable? What changes would be needed to improve the program's fiscal sustainability? What resources might be required to accomplish this?*

Enrollment trends of the MSHS program are consistent. Program data exists over five years, 2012-2016. During the first four years of the program, total enrollment grew from 2 in 2012 to 28 in 2015, then declining to 14 in 2016. This can be compared to the trend of new enrollments that also demonstrate consistency in demand for the program. Table 3.1, *New and Total Enrollment, 2012-2016*, illustrates both new and total enrollment over a five year period. Fiscally, this consistency offers stability for the MSHS program.

This data indicates room for growth in enrollment as evidenced by low student numbers and the capabilities of physical and technological resources. International markets, as demonstrated successful with an enrollment spike in 2015, along with the consideration of an online modality may need to be considered for increasing enrollment.

Table 3.1. New and Total Enrollment, 2012-2016.



Although rates are consistent, the University and program work diligently to continue to grow the program's strengths through continued outreach in international markets in congruence with the USU mission of targeting the underserved population. Consequently, one of the more recent developments to the program in 2015 included an expansion of the program to include Master of Science in Health Sciences – International. Notably, this addition resulted in a surge in enrollment from a total of 13 in 2014 to 28 in 2015.

In considering changes for future development, it may be prudent to consider the offering of the program in a hybrid-manner or in totality as an online program, similar to the compared for profit school in Table 2.2. *Comparison of USU MSHS to Two Similar Programs.*

## 2. RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

*What are the current five-year retention rates for the prior year? How does this compare to benchmark institutions' persistence rates? Are there major demographic differences between students who continue and those who do not? What data are available for graduation rates? Do the graduate demographics align with program demographics? How does the retention/graduation data provided impact the program's academic quality, particularly in relation to student demographics? If applicable, what changes would be needed to improve the retention and graduation rates? What resources might be required to accomplish this?*

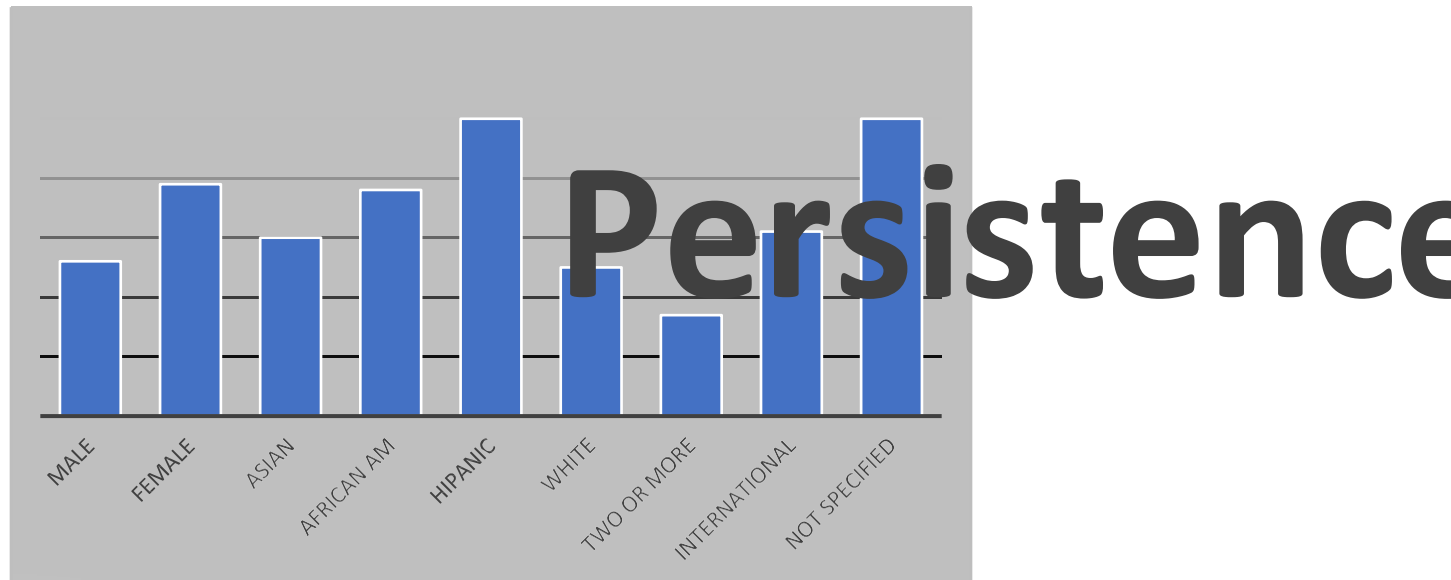
As described in Section II, C., 2. Student retention and graduate rate trends, overall retention/persistence rate for the five year history of the program is 84%, Table 2.9 *Retention Rates over Five Years* and 2.10 *Graduation Rates for 2013-2014 Cohorts* illustrate trends over the history of the program.

Comparing persister rates in relation to demographics reveals MSHS to be congruent with the University mission to serve the underserved population. Reviewing five year trends of persistence categorized by gender and race demonstrates an overall range of 76% of males persisting versus 89% of females.



Additionally, Race/Ethnicity ranges include two or more races of 67%, white being the next lowest at 75% to 100% for Hispanic and not specified groups. This trend is also graphed for review Table 3.2, *Persistence Rates by Demographics*.

Table 3.2. Persistence Rates by Demographics.



Although successful rates can be attributed to the specific focus on the underserved population through targeted pedagogy and student and academic support, the program continues to work to improve retention rates through systematic evaluation. Interpretation of this data indicates a need for further investigation into the unique barriers faced by students that identify with two or more races as well as the White population that attends the MSHS program.

Graduate rates by demographics are not available due to the recent implementation of the program, estimated time frame to complete, and overall lower on-time graduation rates as previously discussed in Section II, C., 2. Despite the small numbers, overall graduation rates over 2013 and 2014 have increased from 67% to 100%. The program will continue to diligently monitor these rates as the number of graduates increase and allow for a statistically accurate breakdown by demographics. At this time, the program would defer to the high rates of retention as evidenced in Tables 2.9 *Retention Rates over Five Years* and 3.2 *Persistence Rates by Demographics*.

### 3. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MARKETPLACE

*Describe and discuss developments in the profession/community/society. How does the program maintain/improve its position in the current educational and societal environment? What changes might be necessary in order to improve the program's position in the educational marketplace? What resources might be required to accomplish this?*

The program utilizes faculty with real-world experience with a unique pedagogy to prepare students for a career in the growing field of healthcare. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports an expected growth in jobs for Healthcare Educators at 12%, Community Health Workers at 15%, and Health Managers at

17% over the next seven years. The MSHS core and specialized curriculum prepares students in these areas of growth.

## B. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

### 1. FACULTY OVERVIEW

*Discuss the core faculty, include the number employed by the program (giving rank and full-part time level of employment), their responsibilities, and the process by which additional core faculty may be added. Describe the faculty workload, including sufficient time for course development, administrative duties, etc. Discuss the adjunct faculty, including how many currently teach in the program, their responsibilities, and how they are incorporated into the program development and learning outcomes assessment process. Include core-adjunct and student-faculty ratios.*

#### Current Faculty

The MSHS program is overseen by Dean Rosalinda E. B. Milla. Dr. Milla received her medical degree from the Philippines where she taught at the in the Departments of Anatomy and chaired in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines leaving in 2001 as Professor III. She also practiced Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation medicine from 1981 to 2001. She was a recipient of a fellowship from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates and served as Visiting Assistant Professor at the UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School. Upon her migration to the United States as an alien of Extraordinary Ability, she returned to school and obtained a MS in Health Care Administration, all while continuing to teach at multiple universities in the San Diego area. She has been a faculty member at USU since 2008, and was made Dean in 2012. The MSHS program specifically is overseen by Division Chair of Health Sciences, Mirjana Zivkovic, MD, PhD. Dr. Zivkovic is exceptionally qualified as a medical doctor and PhD prepared. She has extensive experience in global health and management as well as 31 years of teaching experience. Curricula vitae are available for these individuals in Appendix G.

Table 3.3. Faculty expertise.

Name	Degree/Specialty	Teaching Experience (Years)	Professional Experience (Years)
Rosalinda Milla	MD	36	20
Mirjana Zivkovic	MD, PhD	31	31
Roena Boffman	JD	12	23
Josh Hyatt	DHs	17	17
Susan Harman	DrPH / Epidemiology	3	21
Alice Solovay	JD	29	1
Diane Law	MBA	3.5	36
Bunny Cooley	DBA	19	4

With the exception of the Dean and Division Chair, all faculty members are adjunct positions. Length of service with USU as well as engagement in the USU community through committee work and faculty senate demonstrate a high commitment unusual to adjunct members.

Another benefit of the program includes small faculty/student ratios. Ratios vary between 1:20 = 1:1.

## 2. FACULTY EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

*Describe the faculty review and evaluation process: How are core/adjunct faculty evaluated? What are the results of the most recent evaluation process? Describe the mentoring process for new and/or continuing faculty. Describe the resources provided for faculty (core/adjunct) professional and pedagogical development.*

### New Faculty Orientation

When faculty are hired, they are introduced to the unique pedagogy of the University and the current learning management system (LMS). In summer of 2014, this process was formalized with the development of an orientation checklist, which includes a series of items on which the faculty receive training and can be found in Appendix I. This checklist includes hiring paperwork, creating access to school email and LMS accounts, training on Blackboard, and a meeting with the College's Dean and Division Chair of the MSHS program. This orientation also provides the names and contact information of support staff for IT, student advisors, classroom and library materials, and network administration.

### Oversight

Once a faculty member is assigned to a course, faculty begin review of syllabus, select materials for the course with guidance as needed from the Division Chair, and utilize their expertise to design course learning activities that align with the course learning objectives. This course content is overseen by the Dean and the Division Chair, who check in on courses regularly.

### Evaluation

To assess faculty performance in courses, USU uses both real-time faculty oversight along with end-of-session student evaluations. Both online and on-ground courses are reviewed.

Dean and Division Chairs are responsible for checking in on the courses regularly, ensuring faculty engagement, timeliness of feedback, and review of all course objective. When the Division Chair becomes aware of a problem, the issue is immediately and directly addressed with the faculty member via email or phone call. The university is, however, taking steps towards formalizing the course evaluation. The Faculty Senate is actively working to solidify such processes now.

Additionally, student evaluations are used in both on ground and online classes. USU has been using an online evaluation form, and requesting that students fill out this short survey at the end of each course. Response rates vary as noted in Section II., B., 6 and range from 42.6%-100%. On ground classes represent a higher response rate compared to online courses. However, with very few on ground courses, this does not give the school a full representation for faculty evaluations. Efforts to increase response rates for all types of courses are underway. Proposed solutions include allocating a small grade credit for completion. However, some concern remains that such action will deduct from critical course percentage. Discussions will continue to ensure progress in this area.

Once the evaluations are completed, the results are collated by Institutional Review, and shared with the Associate Provost, then shared with the Dean and Division Chair. The compiled results are provided to the faculty member after completion of the course and the submission of grades. Any student concerns that are brought up by multiple students will be addressed by the Division Chair with the faculty member.

### Faculty Engagement

As previously noted, adjunct faculty members comprise the majority of the teaching faculty in the MSHS program. MSHS adjuncts play a significant role in the governance at USU through Faculty Senate participation. In fact, the President and Vice-President of the Faculty Senate are both adjunct faculty members. Adjunct faculty members are part of all three Faculty Senate sub-committees as well. Additionally, many of these adjunct faculty members are involved in special projects within the College of Health Sciences and the University. Many adjuncts have played a role in course development, based on their professional expertise. They are currently involved in the outcomes assessment process, and they have also advised on several of the coordinated certificate programs the University has begun, including the Global Health certificate program.

## 3. STUDENT SUPPORT

*Describe the academic and career advising programs and resources available to your students, including tutoring, supplemental instruction, basic skill remediation (if applicable), and orientation. Discuss student financial support (scholarships, etc.), support for engagement in the campus community, and for research or engagement in the community beyond campus (fieldwork, internships, etc.), if applicable.*

In congruence with the USU mission to provide “professional and personal educational opportunities, with a special outreach to underserved groups...in a supportive student-centered learning environment” (USU Catalog, 2016, p. 10), USU boasts an extensive list of student support to all students, including specialized services for international learners. Evidence that this support is adequate can be found in student success outcomes as reported as well as overall high student satisfaction reported in Section II. C. 3.

### Orientation

New students complete two online orientations: the USU Student Orientation and the Blackboard® Orientation. Students gain access to the orientations 17 days before the term start date and are expected to complete the orientations by the beginning of the term. If students do not complete the orientations, their academic adviser will contact them regarding their progress. Because these orientations are constructed as courses in Blackboard®, they remain in their Blackboard® course list even after completion. The orientations remain accessible to students until graduation, so students may return at any time to refresh themselves on any orientation topic.

The USU Student Orientation is composed of 5 modules: 1) USU Software & Systems; 2) Student Services & Support; 3) Academic Resources & Learning Guidelines; 4) Financial Services & Academic Policies; 5) End-of-Orientation Survey. Each module concludes with either a reviewed button or a quiz to mark student progress. Domestic and International students are enrolled as separate groups so that each accesses only the appropriate content for their Financial Services modules.

The USU Blackboard® Orientation is composed of 7 modules: 1) Getting to Know Your Blackboard® Classroom; 2) Email & Communicating with Your Instructor; 3) Discussions; 4) Written Assignments; 5) Exams; 6) The Gradebook; 7) End-of-Orientation Survey. This orientation focuses on developing familiarity with the classroom platform and ease with using its tools. Students practice posting discussion posts, taking quizzes, and submitting assignments with the emphasis not on content but on where to look, point, and click.

### Academic Support

Academically, students are offered a variety of tutoring services including online and in person encounters. Face to face encounters are facilitated by Student Services through instructor-led or student-led sessions. Student services can also help to assemble study groups as sought by students. Specific tutoring services are offered in English and math courses, as well as test preparation services and basic skills. Online services can be rendered through email or through the submission of a question and answer format to a tutor, or in real time through Blackboard Collaborate™ or Brainfuse® services.

Specific academic needs of international students are also offered. Students are expected to have the ability to speak and write English at a high school level as evidenced by TOEFL/IELTS. However, additional services are offered to further assist in the mastery of the English language to facilitate student academic success through informational literacy and writing tutors.

### ADA

USU is in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act. “In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the University does not discriminate against individuals with disability” (USU Catalog, 2016, p. 28). Jennifer Strobel is the contact staff member for ADA inquiries.

### Leaves of Absence

USU recognizes the potential student needs that may interrupt the ability to maintain attendance due to medical or other personal needs. Hence, USU offers a leave of absence policy for all students that can be found in the Catalog on pages 22 and 34. USU recognizes the unique needs that may arise for international students regarding leaves of absence and complications with the ability to remain in the United States by encouraging international students to seek his/her student advocate for assistance when a leave of absence is needed. A planned vacation leave is also available for international students to promote well-being for up to one, eight week session after completion of one academic year (USU Catalog, 2016, p. 22).

### Career Services

Career Services Manager (CSM) is available to all students to “actively assist in obtaining employment” (USU Catalog, 2016, p. 29). This service is provided to all students at any stage of development to assist in making appropriate career choices and plans. The CSM provides student-centered leadership and direction in the following areas: career counseling and education, employment and internship assistance, career assessment testing, the dissemination of information related to employment opportunities, and employer relations. Although employment is not guaranteed, staff in this department are able to assist students in these career focused activities.

## Financial Aid

USU understands the financial barriers that may limit or prevent a student from seeking or completing a degree in higher education, thus offering the Financial Aid department to assist in applying for grants, loans and scholarships. In addition to financial aid staff, written booklets are available on eligibility, procedures and programs. Grants, scholarships, loans and payment plans are available to students to help “bridge the gap between educational expenses and personal financial resources” (USU Catalog, 2016, p. 49).

The Financial Aid Office has created a web link for online students that will take them through all aspects of the process including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and all internal documents and disclosures. Access to all processes related to student aid is presently available electronically to be completed remotely for all online students. Financial Aid Director and Advisor are available (in person, email, and/or telephone) to students from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (PST/PDT) Monday through Friday.

## Community Engagement

USU history and mission emphasizes providing relevant, accessible education programs to serve underserved populations in the community. The MSHS program further emphasizes community as a critical factor as it is embedded in program learning objectives. Through a curriculum organized to achieve these community based PLOs through more specific course learning objectives, learning activities throughout the curriculum include activities such as case studies or capstone projects that allow student to apply classroom learning to real-world problems. With approval from community leaders, students work with organizations and employers, benefiting both the learner and the community organizations.

## 4. INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

*Describe the library, information, and technology resources available to your students, including any technology resources available to support both the pedagogy in the program and/or students' needs.*

In accordance with USU pedagogy, courses are organized in modules, designed to achieve course learning objectives, thus, program learning objectives. These PLOs represent a range of learning objectives including mastery knowledge, skills and application of areas such as specific health discipline, ability to conduct and interpret research, engage in critical thinking, and exhibit technological literacy. To assist students in achieving these educational goals, USU provides a rich variety of information and technological resources to support students in their educational journey. Specifically, MHS 599 capstone project requires students to focus on broader literature review, intervention, methods, plan and implications for research, education, and practice, all of which require the use of library resources.

The on-ground library is open during all hours of operation of the campus, Monday through Friday, 9am to 6pm and the first Saturday of each month. An online library is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to a wide variety on onsite books and periodicals, the library is also a member of the San Diego Circuit, an interlibrary loan service which includes UC San Diego, University of San Diego, San Diego State University, California State University San Marcos, the San Diego County Public Libraries, and the San Diego City Public Library.

The library offers six desktop computers and printers, where printing is free. Free wifi is also accessible throughout the campus, including the library. The library offers desks, chairs, and lounge chairs. Additionally, 20 laptops are available for rent.

A USU librarian is available as an active and experienced resource for the students. The librarian is full time, with a Master's in Library Sciences from Syracuse University. She is available on site and remotely through web-conferencing and by telephone Monday through Friday from 9am to 6pm. She supports information literacy activities by orienting students to library resources as well as provides course or one-on-one training on the utilization of data bases for research and proper APA formatting. The librarian also teaches students the skills necessary for use of library resources.

The electronic library resources and databases are organized by college programs. The resources include USU databases (Academic Search Premier EBSCO, Amedeo, American Libraries, BioMed Central, Community Text E-Books, Directory of Open Access Journals, Medscape, to name a few), collections of peer-reviewed open access journals (journals from CINAHL® Complete, MEDLINE® with Full Text, JSTOR Arts & Sciences I Collection, JSTOR Language & Literature, ERIC®, Academic Search Premier, PsycARTICLES®, ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source™, Regional Business News and Business Source Premier), government data and statistics, demographics, e-books, theses, and worldwide open access collections. There are also Library resources and tutorials, online resources and directories created for each program.

Technical support for online courses is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Online tutorial support is available 24/7 as is online library and research support through Brainfuse®. Students can get technical support by going to: <http://www.usuniversity.edu/student-services/help-desk/> or by emailing [helpdesk@usuniversity.edu](mailto:helpdesk@usuniversity.edu). The library supports students' research with online databases and special service allowing students to chat with a Librarian 24/7.

Information Technology support services are available Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00pm. Blackboard has 24/7 support service via phone or email. Additionally, services available to students that support academic success also include: Brainfuse®, an on-demand tutoring service, available 24/7.

Students have access to their course materials through Blackboard and it has 24/7 support services. Students maintain access to the courses throughout the program, which allows them to refer back to a previous course if needed.

Through student satisfaction results from 2016, it is evident that students are highly satisfied with technology and accessibility available at USU with a satisfaction rating of 3.45/4.

## 5. FACILITIES

*Describe the classroom space (including any labs) and student study spaces available to your program students.*

There are ten classrooms with a seating capacity for 20-50 students each. Two classrooms include adjustable walls that can accommodate larger groups of up to 70 each that resemble lecture halls when needed. The total capacity of the University can seat 250 students. All classrooms are equipped with audio visual equipment including a computer, projector and sound system to enhance the learning environment. A student lounge that is inviting with natural sunlight and conditioned for comfort. This

area has five tables, 25 chairs, a refrigerator, and microwave. Snack and drink machines are available and restocked often. Additionally, there is more comfortable seating such as couches and armchairs available for use in the library and corridors throughout the building. All of these facilities are open to students during campus hours of operation.

Four bathrooms are available including two unisex and wheelchair access. Breastfeeding is also promoted as needed by offering space for this as requested.

## 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

*Discuss the program's operational budget (revenues and expenditures) and trends over a 3-5 year period.*

Of the MSHS program, 2015 and 2016 calendar year budgets were available for review. Financial information correlates with the total enrollment of the program, as noted in Table 3.1, *New and Total Enrollment, 2012-2016*. As this graph demonstrates, the peak year of enrollment was in 2015 with 28 students, then dropped to 14 in 2016. Similarly, major financial revenue peaked in 2015 and dropped in 2016. In 2015, revenue was \$1,334,000 with an operating budget totaling \$514,000, totaling a net income of \$819,469. The following year, revenue decreased by 33% to \$901,000 and the operating budget fell by 6% to \$484,000, leaving a net income of \$416,877. These numbers indicate a need for focus on new student enrollment, retention, and a focus on proportional operating budget changes. Full fiscal budget information can be found in Appendix J.



## SUMMARY REFLECTION

### 1. PROGRAM STRENGTHS

*Considering both the program's quality and its sustainability, what are this program's strengths? How can these be used to improve the program's position academically and fiscally?*

The MSHS program enjoys program strengths on each section of this report, including congruence with the governing organization in mission, academics, support services, outcomes, satisfaction, faculty, and resources. Each will be addressed individually.

#### Governing Organization

First, it is evident that the MSHS program is well aligned with the overall mission to serve the underserved population through its dedication to a unique pedagogy, college and program policies, support services, and well evidenced by representation of successful student outcomes in all demographical categories. Continued support can be identified as the program has recently initiated a change to further assist students that were demonstrating difficulty with proficiency in English as it related to coursework. Immediate and appropriate action was taken to offer additional tutoring to assist students in achieving these results. Again, demonstrating that program is committed, along with the University, to reduce barriers unique to the underserved population at USU.

#### Academics

The program of study is comparable with both local and national schools, public and private, in overall required credit hours. The USU MSHS program, however, demonstrates additional strengths to better support unique students, including a pedagogy that can be easily divided into modules, that if necessary, allows for temporary breaks to meet personal demands outside of school. Temporary leave policies of the college and program further support this need, as to decrease students' need to permanently withdraw is circumstances arise that require extended absences. This pedagogy also includes a wide variety of learning activities and delivery methods, including online components, and weekend classes, further diversifying learning opportunities. Another unique strength in comparison with other units is the shortened time frame to completion. Similar programs as estimated to take two to four years, which may cause undue stress to non-traditional students who have other personal or financial responsibilities. Finally, the USU MSHS program curriculum meets standards to allow graduates to be eligible to sit for national certification for Health Education, increasing graduate marketability.

Students report being satisfied with the academic experiences both in course surveys and student satisfaction surveys. Course surveys consistently demonstrate high satisfaction of greater than 4 of 5, Likert-scale measurements in all courses surveyed for 2016, as do the overall student satisfaction rates that represent overall academic experience at 84%,

#### Outcomes

The program has high retention/persister rates, demonstrating academic success and ample student support. Furthermore, upon demographic analysis, it is evident that the program, again, is congruent with the USU mission, as minority groups demonstrate the highest retention rate compared to White students, with the only exception of two or more races. An overall rate of 84% over five years demonstrates consistency and success.

### Student Support

The MSHS program students report having adequate services, and demonstrate academic success through retention rates. Overall satisfaction scores for the University departments, as represented by “Overall education experience” as 84%. Such specific services for international and non-native English speakers, is another example of how the University and MSHS program represent the mission of the school to support this targeted population. The wide variety of resources including computer labs, WiFi, technical support, and academic support offered through the library indicate a holistic approach to student support.

### Faculty

Faculty representation is a strength of the program, while representing diversity in education, expertise, and in gender/ethnicity as the department continues to demonstrate strong consistency with the USU mission. The program demonstrates a commitment to quality improvement by prioritizing assignment based on faculty expertise with course content and with historical experience with the course. This allows the academic time and freedom for the faculty member to build upon and improve the course over time.

### Resources

Available physical and financial resources are adequate and abundant. Classroom seating and student lounge area exceed current enrollment needs allowing for growth in the future. While, enrollment trends are steady, financial resources seem adequate for planning for future needs. The campus has invested in a variety of technological resources that meet student needs and satisfaction while offering an ability to deliver education in a variety of ways to meet unique student needs of the underserved population. Thus, further supporting the mission of the University.

## 2. PROGRAM WEAKNESSES

*Considering both the program’s quality and its sustainability, what are this program’s weaknesses? How might these be converted to strengths?*

### Enrollment

Despite a steady new enrollment rate of four in 2015 and three in 2016, financial sustainability is questioned with such small new enrollment numbers with low enrollment over an extended period of time. This also contributes to significant statistical concerns later as discussed in outcomes of retention and graduation. It is noted, however, that the MSHS program began outreach to the international population which significantly increased the persist rates in 2015, signaling that this new outreach may be a potentially successful avenue for the program’s ability to increase new enrollment.

As USU continues to demonstrate commitment to the underserved population, and in combination with the strengths of the program’s faculty, use of technology, and student support, the feasibility of an online offering of the program should be considered to grow the enrollment through increased accessibility and decreasing barriers of transportation, location, and outside commitments. As noted throughout this review, it is believed that an online offering may assist with other areas of weakness such as retention and graduation, as well.

## Outcomes

Persister rates available are steady at a high rate of 84% over a five year period. However, graduation rates for less than 150% of the program are 20% and 50% for 2013 and 2014. When factoring in graduates who completed the program over 150% of the expected time period, the graduate rate increases to 100%. Although this is reassuring that students are meeting requirements eventually, the goal remains to deliver a program with adequate support to assist students in graduating in a realistic time frame. It also questions the need for the program to re-evaluate the current program of study, possibly requiring a change to better meet the needs of the targeted population and the ability to complete in the estimated time frame.

Due to the unique population at USU, it is difficult to compare persister and graduate outcomes rates fairly and adequately without University benchmarks for each outcome. It would be suggested that the administration, with the input from the faculty and based on previous existing data, collaborate to create University benchmarks in order for the individual programs to compare.

Program learning outcomes (PLO) are well written and align closely with the University mission. However, it is difficult to discern their evaluation and how those results are used to make substantive changes without measurable objectives/goals. Although the planned schedule of PLO measurement of every four years is congruent with the University policy, it seems to be insufficient to quickly identify necessary changes that will directly impact student learning and success. The University has vast ancillary support including Institutional Researcher that may be able to assist in creating a simpler, yet more streamlined process to, at least on a basic level, identify and correct deficits.

It can be well-noted through anecdotal communication that the MSHS program works swiftly to make necessary changes as the need is identified through surveys, student or faculty voiced concern, or through the PLO evaluation; however, there is little physical evidence of the discussion or input of the faculty, how solutions were selected, and the evaluation of the solution. This can be noted as a natural phenomenon of a small program; however, documentation must be maintained. It would be suggested that the Division Chair or Dean keep an informal record of personal communication or emails that were used in program changes, or to re-cap such personal communication in routine faculty meetings where the information is recorded in meeting minutes.

## Curriculum

A curriculum map was provided that identifies how the PLOs organize the curriculum in a simple to complex manner by introducing, developing, and mastering content. However, further inspection of the course learning objectives (CLOs) did not consistently support this although some examples were noted. The language of the CLOs in the program syllabi was inconsistent with some containing appropriate general course specific learning goals, while other syllabi include such specific language it is questionable that any variation per faculty discretion would be available.

Scaffolding was at times very difficult to discern, as very high level cognitive verbs were used for introductory core courses while the course stated to master knowledge seemed more targeted towards learning activities rather than measurable student learning objectives. It is strongly recommended that the program engage in curriculum review to thoroughly evaluate the language of the CLOs create a more organized presentation and scaffolding of CLOs. The CLOs should be clearly related to PLOs using language that easily identified the knowledge scaffolding from simple to complex, with the final

capstone course closely resembling the PLOs, as these should represent the final learning outcomes of the program.

#### Financial Resources

A concern is noted with the decreased enrollment and a resulting decrease in revenue. Despite the decreased revenue between 2015 and 2016 of 67%, the operating budget only decreased by 6%, leaving a major change in net income over a one year period. A focus on enrollment increases and budget control in perspective of revenue is recommended for sustainability of the program. Of note, the major area of expense in the program is related to faculty salary. However, the a major strength of the program is diverse, qualified, faculty expertise. It may be considered that the MSHS program share the faculty with other appropriate USU programs until MSHS enrollment is increased. The diversity of the faculty expertise and education further increase the feasibility of this solution.

### 3. PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

*Considering both the program's quality and its sustainability, what are the program's opportunities? How can these be made realities?*

The USU mission, institutional learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, faculty, services and pedagogy are unique in its targeted purpose and ability to serve minority and international students. The resources, specifically, the diverse faculty and technology, are well-equipped to continue to reach this population. Additionally, the University's location in Southern California, an area well-known for diversity further optimizes the potential to continue to expand. It would be the recommendation that the program continue to seek out local and international students through marketing, local healthcare organizations, minority job fairs, etc. to perform additional outreach. Through the future development of an online delivery, the program may further maximize these populations through international and younger generational prospective students.

### 4. PROGRAM THREATS

*Considering both the program's quality and its sustainability, what are the program's threats? How can these be neutralized?*

Program threats include competition from other local and national schools that offer like programs. It can be noted, however, that these schools do not have the demographic make up of the USU student body. Continued specialized services and policies that support the removal of unique barriers of minority or international students are a key benefit of choosing USU.

### 5. CHANGES AND RESOURCES

*Considering both the program's quality and its sustainability, what are the most important changes to be made? What are the resources required to implement change?*

Of the most importance, it is assured that enrollment numbers must be increased. Resources needed to do this would most likely include marketing and admissions as well as swift action to determine

feasibility of offering online delivery options. Based on this report, the online delivery option may assist in major weaknesses including enrollment, retention and timely graduation rates. Fortunately, USU has a wealth of technology resources and facilities in place as evidenced by other successful online programs, on-ground resources that include computers, printers, wifi, online resources including IT assistance, online library and resources, and high student satisfaction rates with technology. The existence of these resources significantly decreases the financial resources that may be required when moving or adding an online delivery method. Resources that will be required in addition would include the human resources and financial resources required to oversee, prepare, and correspond with the accreditation organization to request a substantial change to the program. However, the program maintains consistent outcomes and the availability of resources required for a sustainable online program. An accepted change request from the accreditation organization would be expected.

Secondly, a curriculum revision, not requiring substantial change would be strongly recommended. As noted in this report, the overall program of study is strong in overall PLO delivery but needs language revision to clearly demonstrate alignment with PLOs for all courses and proper scaffolding from simple to complex. This is evident in some core courses, but upon full review of the curriculum map, and comparison of CLOs and PLOs, a significant gap is noted. This could result in a significant curriculum finding in future accreditation reviews and create a barrier in maintaining full accreditation. Resources required to conduct this revision include human resources with expertise in curriculum revision. In house resources could be utilized if available or consulting resources could be utilized as well.

Finally, an improvement to existing documentation of outcomes is critical to maintaining accreditation. Due to the nature of the small program, frequent and casual communication is the major method of identifying concerns, planning and implementing solutions and evaluating effects. Although this is most likely effective as evidenced by high satisfaction rates and consistent outcome rates, it does not allow for efficacy or efficiency in quality improvement of the program. With minimal resources, the Dean and/or Division Chair can begin to create a system that documents informal communication and changes made. This ease of documentation can be done more consistently and timely. It would be advised that a grid with measurable objectives be created that can be completed on an end-of-term basis be created. This will assist in monitoring changes to increase quality in the program. This system will also be invaluable for future program and accreditation reviews to demonstrate change and impact. Resources required are minimal to none.

## **V. FUTURE GOALS AND PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### **A. GOALS**

*As part of your evidence-based plan for strengthening the program, list the goals for the next few years.*

1. Increase Enrollment
  - a. Collaborate with marketing to design a creative marketing campaign that reaches both local and international students
  - b. Educate the marketing team on job demands for MSHS degrees
  - c. Educate the marketing team on the unique strategies USU MSHS program utilizes to offer a targeted education that supports the underserved student
2. Offer online delivery modality for the MSHS program
  - i. Complete survey for expected need, utilization, cost

- ii. Survey internal factors
  - iii. Inquire with accrediting bodies as to regulations and procedures
- 3. Improve Documentation of Goals and Outcomes
  - a. Develop system to accurately and efficiently document changes/improvements to monitor program outcomes
    - i. Document informal discussion, rationales for changes
    - ii. Create simple way to monitor changes by term or course period to monitor short term changes
    - iii. Utilize data per term to assist in long term goal attainment
- 4. Engage in Curriculum Revision
  - a. Without substantive changes, review curriculum:
    - i. Revise CLOs to be consistent, measurable, realistic objectives
    - ii. Revise CLOS to be organized using the PLOs as a guide to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness
    - iii. Revise CLOs to ensure proper scaffolding to demonstrate simple to complex learning goals.
  - b. Review feasibility of online delivery to increase enrollment and outcomes
- 5. Increase Retention and Graduate Rates
  - a. Identify barriers
    - i. Create risk survey for students for a quantitative review of barriers in current student population
    - ii. Review and identify top three barriers, while working to design creative and feasible plan that may assist in the overcoming.
  - b. Continue to review similar programs
    - i. Noted that while two identified Masters of Health Science programs had comparable programs of study, both projected a much longer period of time to complete. This may be a future consideration to assist in on time graduation
    - ii. Identify retention and graduation rates of similar programs with online availability as this may indicate a strong need for considering this modality in the near future.
- 6. Maintain Faculty Strengths
  - a. Faculty diversity and expertise are a strength of the program
    - i. Continue to support faculty employment during low enrollment periods through the sharing of teaching loads with other USU departments as appropriate with expertise and education
    - ii. Explore opportunities for full time employment as MSHS program grows to encourage continued dedication and engagement
    - iii. Connect and collaborate with faculty to gain ideas about improving student outcomes by recognizing faculty as the link between the MSHS program and the students
      - 1. Offer off-campus meetings to encourage discussion, creativity, and relaxation

2. Sincerely and verbally recognize faculty for their work with an impromptu meeting to maintain faculty satisfaction and commitment

**B. IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

*List the deliverables/measures, target dates, and resources required (costs and personnel) to achieve the goals listed above. As not all recommendations may be fundable in the next year, prioritize the recommendations in order of importance, demonstrating how certain activities have the greatest potential to create improvement and therefore should be accomplished and funded first.*