

Health and Public Services Department

The concept of a health department emerged in the early 1970s. Initially the college was small enough to operate with two instructional sub departments: career education and adult and continuing education. Each was headed by a director, who was assisted by an assistant director. A faculty member was designated as the program chair and reported to the director of career education.

In effect, the assistant director of career education often assumed responsibility for several programs and met regularly with the program chairs. Monthly program chair meetings, headed by the director of career education, were held to discuss major initiatives, topics that were of interest to programs, and directives from the Iowa Department of Education.

As the number of occupational programs increased, it was decided to create three divisions within the career education department: business, health occupations and trade and industrial. A full-time administrator was named to head each of these departments. The initial department heads in each area were Don Huntoon, Business; Gerald Konsler, Health Occupations; and Norm Luiken, Trade and Industrial. Nursing had a full time chair, Marine Betts, because of the size of the program. These chairs had institution-wide responsibility for programs in their area and worked with faculty at each campus.

The primary responsibilities of the department chairs were to provide leadership for programs in their area, supervise instructional activities, provide input into annual faculty performance evaluations, and work with external groups that had influence over the program, i.e. Iowa Department of Education, maintain program accreditation, hold periodic meetings of faculty, and recruit and recommend candidates for faculty positions.

The program chairs were very professional and committed to delivering excellent instruction. Very early in the life of the college most programs that had the potential for national accreditation applied and received it. This was an important assurance to both students and health employers that the graduates were prepared and able to perform at a high level in a job. The preparation for accreditation involved substantial extra time for faculty who willingly made the effort required to receive this national recognition of program quality.

Creating Health and Public Services

In 1982, President Borgen reorganized the academic departments at DMAACC in a rather bold way by hybridizing adult education, career education, and arts and sciences. The two-year allied health programs all required several science courses including chemistry, microbiology, anatomy, and physiology. Thus, Borgen created a new department called Health Services and Sciences with Burgess Shriver as the dean. The department included 1) math and sciences, 2) all the allied health programs, and 3) the health section of adult education. Borgen believed that more communication and cooperation would occur with this unique administrative structure. This departmental organization lasted until 1990. During that eight year span,

Surgical Technology was terminated and Child Care remodeled that newly available space and moved there from lower campus. Dental Hygiene had been limited to 14 new students per year for over a decade with long waiting lists. Dental Hygiene was able to successfully remodel and expand its clinical area to 24 chairs during this era. Another highlight in the '80s was that for the first time, our nursing programs became accredited by the American Nurses Association. This important step was taken under the leadership of Nursing Director Joan von Grabow and applied to all three campuses that had nursing programs.

In 1990, the college structure for academic programs reverted back to a more traditional format. Pam Van Ast was named Dean of Health and Public Services while Shriver became Dean of Sciences and Humanities.

During those years the departmental focus was program improvement through technology, both updated equipment and state of the art classroom technology, accreditation, and faculty development and support. All programs were nationally accredited with excellent reports following each accreditation visit. Students were also consistently successful on national accreditation exams. The child development center also earned national accreditation.

Many programs were consistently at capacity and job placement was excellent, due to the support of individual program advisory committees with members of each discipline providing input on curriculum and current practice. During this time, faculty were encouraged to obtain advanced degrees and be active on a national level in their respective organizations; they received department support through release time and professional development support.

Many programs also instituted program prerequisites prior to admission to assure student success in an ever-changing profession. Nursing, for example, required nursing assistant completion, plus successful completion of specific science courses, and an entrance exam. During this time, nursing aligned its curriculum with Iowa's BSN programs to assure ease of transfer for students who wanted to further their education. These measures helped assure student success.

Nursing assistance and emergency medical technician also became certificate programs with college credit. Several grants were also awarded in the health area.

Health and Public Services Department 2005-2015

Sally Schroeder became the dean of Health and Public Services in 2005. It was the summer of Katrina and the department answered the call for help by donating two carloads of medical supplies. There was a continuing discussion of connecting and expanding Ankeny Campus Buildings 8 and 9 to address space need for health programs. Most pressing was the Ankeny Campus Nursing Programs that were housed in three buildings. A need was perceived to consolidating nursing labs and classes in a single centralized location.

Focus groups were held with representatives of the sixteen hospitals in the college's merged area to assess the future demand for DMACC health graduates. The groups projected a need for additional nursing, medical laboratory technology and respiratory care graduates. These new programs were suggested: optometric technology, health information technology, pharmacy technology, paramedic, physical therapy technology, and certified occupational technology assistant. The demand for surgical technology graduates encouraged the college to reinstate the program at the Urban Campus. It had been discontinued in 1986, based on low enrollments.

The Department received the DMACC Department of the Year award for conducting a Summer Survivor Camp for middle school students. The week-long camp provided hands-on learning and fun for faculty, students and families.

In 2007, representatives of the communities of Newton, Pella, and Knoxville met to request that DMACC establish a nursing program on the Newton Campus. They recommended a LPN (licensed practical nursing program) be offered with consideration given to adding the RN (registered nursing) later. The LPN program opened in 2007. Each of DMACC's six campuses now offered nursing programs. In 2014 the ADN was offered at the Newton Campus.

Also in 2007, the DMACC Board authorized a capital campaign to raise \$2 million for a new health sciences building on the Ankeny Campus. Two million of the \$14 million funding for the facility was raised in a short period of time with several major donors (Unity Point, Polk County Board of Supervisors) and numerous small contributors from many faculty, staff and other donors. The remaining funds for construction came from college funds. Ground was broken in the summer on the grassy knoll between Ankeny Campus Buildings 8 and 21. The three-story building was erected in record time, and the ribbon-cutting was held on December 8, 2008. Health faculty and staff moved into the building around Thanksgiving, and the first classes were held in January, 2009.

A community open house was held to display the building in late January. Some features of the building include several study areas, campus health, private offices, adjunct faculty office, a display case, and an ambulance. The building's ambiance is enhanced with large plants in windows at the building entrance. A poinsettia tree that stands in the atrium offers the opportunity for an annual event to raise funds for Toys for Tots.

Launching Pharmacy Tech

Pharmacy technology was launched in the fall of 2009 after a two-year development process that included conducting a needs assessment, developing curriculum, forming an advisory committee, sending a letter of intent to the Iowa Department of Education (IDE), receiving approval from the DMACC Curriculum Committee and the DMACC Board, holding information sessions to attract students, and employing a pharmacist as a faculty member to lead the new program. The one-year diploma program was created to create a means for students to be able to pass the national exam. Certification requires a passing score on a nationally recognized

certification exam such as the PTCB (Pharmacy Technician Certification Board) or ExCPT (Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians).

Nursing and Early Childhood Education at Urban

The Nursing and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) programs shared a small space in the Betts Building on the Urban Campus. In 2009 that Mercy Capitol (the old Des Moines General Hospital) contacted DMACC President Rob Denson to offer to lease space for DMACC programs. Subsequently Mercy sold the building to the State of Iowa. DMACC then leased two floors to house the Early Childhood Education, CNA and nursing programs. The first classes were held in 2010 after renovation. Mercy allowed the college to select furniture (chairs and tables) from Mercy's warehouse. Relocating these programs released space that was in high demand at the Urban Campus.

Implementing Optometric/Ophthalmic Tech

Also in the fall of 2009, Optometric /Ophthalmic Technology program was implemented after Hawkeye Community College (HCC) closed its program. DMACC purchased instructional program equipment from HCC and is now the only college in Iowa to offer this program. This program is designed to prepare students with the skills necessary to assist practitioners of optometry, ophthalmology, and opticianry to provide a full scope of vision care and prepare them to pass national certification exams. The national accreditation process will be completed in 2015.

Establishing Health Information Tech

Health Information Technology (HIT) was offered for the first time in the fall of 2010. Prior to developing this associate's degree program, DMACC benefitted from a grant to train incumbent workers in HIT. Area hospital and clinics are eager to employ workers who understand meaningful use, reimbursement, and electronic medical records.

Adding EMT/Paramedic

The Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic began in the fall of 2010. It prepares individuals to use critical thinking skills to provide medical treatment for patients with illness or injury-related disease. Students have the choice to obtain a diploma or continue on for their AAS in three specialty areas: fire, administration, or clinical. The national program accreditation process will be completed in 2015.

Health and Public Services Department Operates Businesses

Two business operations related to instructional programs are a part of the Health and Public Services Department. The dental clinic sees over 2,000 patients per year. A dentist is always present on clinic days. The dental hygiene program increased enrollment from 20 to 24

students while the Dental Assisting program increased from 32 to 44 annual student admissions. Both programs use the dental clinic. The clinic has been remodeled to update the facility and increase patient capacity from 16 to 20. A portion of the cost of the remodeling was raised from dentists and related groups like Delta Dental, which made a major contribution to the successful fundraising campaign.

The dental hygiene program has had an annual exchange with the Yamanachi Dental Hygiene Dental College since 1986. Every other year two students and one instructor from Japan come to DMACC for two weeks to discuss curriculum, instructional methods, and differences in the cultures. On the alternate year, DMACC sends two students and an instructor to Japan for a similar experience.

The other H & PS Department business is the DMACC Daycare Center, which is licensed to serve 65 children from age two to five. The Center provides a lab school practicum for early childhood students. The space has been remodeled several times to accommodate increasing numbers of children. Beginning in the fall of 2015, infants will be accepted, so the age will become six weeks to five years.

Continuing Education Courses Transition to Health and Public Service Department

Two programs formerly administered by the Continuing Education Department transitioned to the H and PS Department recently, based on their close relationship to related full-time health programs: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). CNA is a prerequisite for nursing, and many high school students enroll in these basic and advanced certificate programs. An emergency medical technology (EMT) certificate and the course is a prerequisite for the Paramedic Program.

Several faculty positions are funded through Accelerated Career Education (ACE). Hospitals and other employers use their withholding taxes to help DMACC. The contracts are signed every 5 years, and the money may also be used for staff development and equipment.

All instructional programs hold advisory committee meetings twice a year. Committee members are employed in the program area or have responsibility for employees in the occupation. Agendas include updates on the program operation, challenges, employment demand and changes in the responsibilities in the occupation. The members also assist graduates in learning about employment opportunities. Each year several committee members are invited to a DMACC Gourmet Dinner as a thank you for serving on the committee.

Employing a Health Navigator

A health navigator was hired in 2014 to assist prospective students in CNA and nursing. This individual is a resource for student issues related to work, school, and life demands. The navigator also assists students who are challenged, in an effort to assist them in graduating from the program.

H & PS is the only academic department that hosts Project Search. This is an Easter Seals program for young adults with disabilities. This is the third year for the interns, who help with office duties, deliveries, phones, laundry, etc. We have been impressed with their attitudes and eagerness to assist.

Fun activities in the department have included the annual cook out in June, ethnic potluck in March, ice cream in July and a Thanksgiving feed, followed by a junk week in December.

New on the horizon is Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) on the Newton campus. An advisory committee has been named and is assisting with a needs assessment for the proposed program. The start date will be fall of either 2015 or 2016, depending on the time required to complete the development activities for the program.

All the dean's letters and certificates are now electronic, saving the handwriting of hundreds of signatures. Typically, program chairs meet six times per year.

Future issues and challenges

- Keeping programs and curriculum current in an ever-changing health care environment
- Obtaining adequate funding for new programs and the updating of current programs with both equipment and classroom technology
- Obtaining funding to assure the continual support of faculty to update and maintain their skills

Many job opportunities will continue to be available for health program students if standards and industry input and accreditation continue to be a priority. Support systems for students are also critical as programs continue to evolve and add additional skills and requirements to insure student success.

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