Date:  December 1, 2016  
From:  Mark Geil, PhD  
        Professor and Chair  
Re:  Academic Program Review Self-Study  

The Kinesiology and Health self-study represents the results of a lengthy process of self-examination and collective determination of our priorities for the future. I have been pleased by the process, and I am grateful to our faculty and, in particular, our APR committee, for their hard work in the development of the document and for their investment in the process. Our committee was chaired by Andy Doyle and included Beth Cianfrone, Rachel Gurvitch, and Courtney Strosnider. The self-study was approved by the faculty on December 1, 2016.

In many ways, I believe KH is a microcosm of the university as a whole. During the review period we’ve experienced remarkable growth in credit hour production, particularly at the undergraduate level. In parallel, we’ve remained active in research, producing prominent publications and presentations but remaining limited in our external funding. The two are clearly connected. We, like the university, have emerged as respected leaders in our research disciplines, but we have been strained by uncontrolled growth in numbers of students. And we, like the university, have come a remarkably long way in the past few years.

Our total student enrollment is consistently above 1,000, and is typically around 83% undergraduate. Our total credit hour generation has risen 26%, from 16,245 in FY14 to 20,495 in FY16. Success stories abound: Our majors are among the most popular on campus. One of our graduate programs was recently ranked top ten in the world. Our graduates are prepared to contribute to critical areas focused on improving health and wellness in our society. Though we are proud of our academic programs and their impact on campus, we recognize the considerable strain this has placed on faculty time and physical space. In contrast to this growth, our number of full time faculty members has held steady at 20, 21, and 20 for the three-year period, indicating sacrifice of other activities as time and energy are consumed by a rising number of undergraduate students.

As credit hour production has risen, several important indicators of research productivity have remained relatively consistent. Peer-reviewed journal publications totaled 33, 33,
and 32 over the review period, and books and chapters totaled 6, 9, and 6. Much of our research occurs with human subjects in specialized laboratories that tend toward long-term hypotheses of higher impact and lower frequency. For example, a funded line of research is changing prosthetic prescription guidelines in pediatric orthopedics. Another multidisciplinary effort is revolutionizing post-ACL injury rehabilitation and was published in the world’s highest-ranking sports medicine journal.

While we have been able to support students on significant contracts, funding for our research has come primarily from internal grants and small seed grants. Only two larger grants were active during the review period, as one faculty member was co-PI on an NIH grant that ended in 2015 and another received a 3-year, $100k/year external research grant from a private foundation that is ongoing. This lack of federal funding stems from two sources: faculty members who are not writing grants to federal agencies (or have no funding sources available for their discipline), and others who are very active in grant writing but are to date unsuccessful.

The faculty has deliberately crafted goals to capitalize on our strengths, address our limitations, and catalyze innovation. They match the university’s strategic plan, and are in some cases in lock-step with specific tasks from that plan. We will seek to right-size our enrollment across programs and extend a renewed focus on enhancing undergraduate student success. We seek to grow our graduate programs in new areas and with new interdisciplinary concentrations, recognizing the need for sustained student funding. We will utilize our strong diversity to prepare future academic leaders from under-represented groups. We will interface with our campus and community, fostering wellness and promoting service learning. And we have a detailed plan to grow our external funding and GRA support.

Though many of our goals will be accomplished without the need for monetary resources, some do carry relatively minor needs for which we’ve developed targeted plans. Our most overarching need is space, to free up research labs from their dual duties in instruction, to develop experiential learning opportunities for our students, and to provide labs for research faculty who have either never had them or who have resided in temporary space for years.

Our department is an assemblage of dedicated teachers and world-class researchers who work toward a vital common mission. We already have an important presence within our college and our campus, and we have the pieces in place to be strategic in our growth. I am confident in our future and our fit within a thriving university.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Geil
Chair