

External Program Review

Bachelor of Science in Therapeutic Recreation

Department of Health Sciences
School of Health Sciences, Human Services, and Nursing

Lehman College, City University of New York (CUNY)
APEX, 250 Bedford Park Blvd West
Bronx, New York 10468

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Process for the External Program Review- B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation

Lehman College, City University of New York (CUNY) requires faculty of non-accredited programs to routinely review and reflect on the relevance of their academic program. During academic year 2020-2021, the Department of Health Sciences chose to pursue an external review of the B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation program, which is one of two B.S. degrees in the Recreation Education and Therapy program in the Department of Health Sciences, in the School of Health Sciences, Human Services, and Nursing.

Although the program also offers a 33-credit Master of Science degree in Recreation Education, coordinated by TR faculty member Dr. Hyangmi Kim, the reviewer was not charged with reviewing this program and, thus, it does not appear in this report.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the visit was conducted in a virtual format using the Zoom videoconferencing platform on April 20-21, 2021 by Dr. Patti Craig, CTRS/L, FDRT from the University of New Hampshire; herein referred to as the “reviewer.”

Dr. Elgloria Harrison, Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Human Services, and Nursing solicited the reviewer’s services in the Fall of 2020, and provided the reviewer with an electronic version of the 2020-2021 Self-Study Report for the B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation program in the Spring of 2021.

The following **CHARGES** served as a framework to guide and focus the external review. The reviewer presented these charges in advance of the review to the Department of Health Sciences, and the full-time Therapeutic Recreation program faculty, who agreed upon the framework with one addition to Charge 4 related to *moving toward accreditation with the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT)*, <https://accreditationcouncil.org/Accreditation-Resources/COAPRT-Standards>

1. Has the unit (program) aligned its activities with the university/school’s mission and strategic priorities (academic, research, service) and have these activities and programs helped the university/school to achieve its goals?
2. Are there external trends or conditions (academic, research, service) that enhance the unit’s (program) ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, and objectives?
3. Are there external trends or conditions (academic, research, service) that threaten the unit’s (program) ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, and objectives?
4. From the external reviewer’s perspective, is the unit’s (program) infrastructure (human, physical, and financial) sufficient to achieve its vision, mission, and goals?
5. Is the unit (program) prepared to meet the emerging needs of the field, *including moving toward accreditation with the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT)*? Is the curriculum preparing its graduates to meet the emerging needs of the field?

The reviewer's findings in relation to this framework of guiding questions are summarized in Appendix A: Summary of External Review Charges. For efficiency, the reviewer has combined charges 1-3 in one table, and charges 4 and 5 appear in their own tables. The reviewer also offers specific recommendations relevant to each charge in the last column of each table titled "Recommendations: Opportunities to Mitigate and/or Capitalize on External Trends in Preparation for Program Accreditation through COAPRT." A brief summation of the program's strengths, challenges, and growth opportunities is presented at the conclusion of the report.

Prior to the site visit, the reviewer examined program, departmental, school, and college reports/documents/artifacts, and relevant web pages. The reviewer also viewed the virtual campus tour on the Lehman College website (see Appendix B: Sources of Information Used for the External Program Review).

The reviewer then conducted the virtual site visit on April 20-21, 2021 (see Appendix C: Virtual Site Visit Itinerary) and met with multiple internal stakeholders via Zoom to gather information and perspectives about the current state of the B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation program. It is worth noting that the people with whom the reviewer interacted were forthright in sharing their perspectives and appraisals during the external review. The reviewer was impressed with the engaging students and alumni, dedicated faculty, and the pleasant and forthright Departmental and School administration. It is clear that Lehman College takes great pride in its students and faculty.

Unique Context – COVID-19 Global Pandemic (March 2020-current)

This external review was conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic. In response to the start of the pandemic in March 2020, Lehman College closed its campus, and moved to a fully remote delivery format to conclude the spring 2020 semester, and continued with this remote format throughout the duration of academic year 2020-2021. Since March 2020, all courses and student advising, mentoring, and office hour sessions have been delivered in a remote format through the Zoom videoconferencing platform, the Blackboard course management platform, email, and telephone. Further, all in-person meetings and activities were suspended, including in-person student fieldwork experiences.

Like most academic programs throughout the U.S., this atypical academic environment disrupted and constrained the regular delivery of content in the B.S. in TR curriculum during the spring 2020 semester and the 2020-2021 academic year.

Specifically noted, the pandemic suspended and/or delayed in-person fieldwork and clinical education experiences for a number of Lehman students, including the full-time capstone internship in TR, which is a critical standard for credentialing through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® (NCTRC) (discussed in subsequent section). As a result, some students' graduation timelines were delayed or adjusted to meet student needs. This was a primary concern expressed during the reviewer's meeting with current students in the remote TR course, *REC 425: Process and Techniques of TR*. Some students indicated they changed their degree plans altogether, forgoing the capstone TR internship experience and opting instead to graduate with the Recreation Education degree. While they appreciated the flexibility associated

with this option, which allowed them to graduate on time, they were understandably frustrated with the wholesale change to their program and inability to complete their desired degree. They described feeling “stuck in a no-win situation” because, while they preferred to finish their TR degree program and sit for the NCTRC certification exam as planned, they had family responsibilities that were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of the pandemic on student graduation plans was clearly outside the control of the TR faculty and Departmental and School administration. The faculty’s flexibility in offering an alternative graduation path through the Recreation Education degree was an effective short-term solution to an unprecedented problem.

Further, the reviewer’s meetings with program alumni, full-time and part-time TR faculty and Program Directors, the Department of Health Sciences Chair, and the School’s Dean conveyed a common theme of “stress,” as many admitted feeling “challenged” and “fatigued” by the novel academic environment over the past year and a half. Although challenging, faculty also shared unforeseen benefits and opportunities for innovation during this timeframe, such as developing online instructional expertise, exploring the use of technology in pedagogy, and creating a sense of community through colleague and Departmental support.

Collectively, these are important “pandemic-era qualifiers” to consider while reading this external review report.

Therapeutic Recreation Education

This report is intended to highlight circumstances that impact the B.S. in TR program. To this end, it may be instructive to contextualize the nature of TR education for the consumers of this report. The reviewer suggests that the resource and time intensive nature of delivering quality TR education deserves appropriate consideration in evaluating the aspirations of any such program.

The bachelor’s degree is currently the entry-level degree for TR practice. Upon meeting educational and experiential eligibility requirements, candidates (students) can sit for the national certification examination administered by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® (NCTRC) (www.nctrc.org). Upon passing the knowledge-based exam, the candidate is awarded the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential, which is evidence that the individual, through education and experience, has met the NCTRC Certification Standards. The award of the CTRS credential allows the individual to use the titles “Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®” and “CTRS®” subject to NCTRC Certification Standards.

Without the CTRS credential, the employment of future TR practitioners is severely hampered. As such, NCTRC requirements drive the content of the basic curriculum in TR programs. A minimum of 18 hours of TR specific course work, 18 hours of supportive coursework in the sciences (e.g. anatomy and physiology) and social sciences (e.g. Human Development, General and Abnormal Psychology), and a tightly regulated 560-hour, 14-week minimum internship requirement round out the current requirements. It should be noted that these standards have only increased over time.

Further, in states in which licensure laws exist, TR professionals are also required to obtain licensure to practice. New York State does not presently require licensure for recreational therapists.

As an allied health profession, TR education functions as do most healthcare training programs, with an essential emphasis on the development and application of clinical knowledge, skills and abilities. Therapeutic recreation specialists, also known as recreational therapists, work with people with a variety of disabilities and health conditions, and are employed in a wide range of health and human service settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes, adult day care, youth agencies, school programs, behavioral health centers, substance use treatment centers, veteran's hospitals, community-based TR and adaptive sport programs, and homeless shelters.

Successful field-based experiences underpin TR students' ability to meet the benchmarks of entry-level practice. TR clinical education requires investment of significant resources for training materials, learning laboratory space, advanced practice faculty, and quality fieldwork and internship placements, to name a few. The coordination of sound, appropriate, and practical field placement experiences often requires extensive faculty time to identify, vet, and cultivate these critical partner relationships. The connection to, and the working relationship between, faculty and multiple fieldwork and internship supervisors (CTRSs in the field) is a lynchpin for successful completion of all TR academic programs and the students' ability to qualify for national certification.

The reviewer's findings in relation to the framework of guiding questions (charges) are summarized in the next 11 pages of Appendix A: Summary of External Review Charges. Recommendations are provided for each charge in the far right column of each table.

Appendix A: Summary of External Review Charges

<p>Activities & Strategic Priorities</p>	<p>Charge 1: Has the program aligned its activities with the college/school’s mission & strategic priorities (academic, research, service) & have these activities helped the college to achieve its goals?</p>	<p>Charge 2: Are there external trends or conditions (academic, research, service) that <u>enhance</u> the program’s ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, and objectives?</p>	<p>Charge 3: Are there external trends or conditions (academic, research, service) that <u>threaten</u> the program’s ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, & objectives?</p>	<p>Recommendations Opportunities to mitigate and/or capitalize on external trends in preparation for program accreditation through COAPRT</p>
<p>Mission, Vision, Goals</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lehman’s mission is to serve the Bronx & surrounding region as an intellectual, economic, & cultural center. Lehman provides undergrad & grad studies in the liberal arts & sciences & professional education within a dynamic research environment, while embracing diversity & actively engaging students in academic, personal, & professional development. • The School’s mission is not available on the website. • Health Sciences Dept aims are to learn to provide technical assistance in the analysis of health problems, policy formation, & management; & to 	<p>The mission of the Program aligns with the College mission & Dept aims, as it prepares professionally educated TR professionals to serve their communities, provide leadership, & conduct applied research that address quality of life issues for people with disabilities & health conditions across a broad range of service settings.</p> <p>The TR program is guided by 3 of the 4 Recreation Education program goals, which are posted on Recreation Ed webpage:</p> <p>Goal I: Demonstrate entry-level knowledge of: (1) the nature & scope of the relevant park, recreation, tourism, and/or related professions & their associated industries; (2) techniques & processes used by professionals & workers in these industries; (3) foundation of the profession</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the fabric of life grows in complexity, and as our population becomes more diverse, people are increasingly turning to leisure & recreation services to find meaning, renewal, & enrichment. TR is rooted in the belief that the use of purposeful recreation can improve the health & wellbeing of people of all backgrounds who are facing disability or health conditions. The Program’s health promotion philosophy aligns with Dept & School aims. • N.Y. ranks 3rd in the highest employment level of TR professionals behind CA & TX, respectively. N.Y. city ranks first as the metropolitan area with highest employment level of TR professionals (U.S. Dept of Labor Stats, May 2020) • The Program’s involvement in 3 interdisciplinary minors aligns with aims of interprofessional education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve consistent learning outcomes & competencies among grads, B.S. programs are encouraged to seek accreditation that meets Council for Higher Education Accreditation standards. Two options exist for the accreditation of TR education programs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT) 2. Commission on the Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education (CARTE) • As one of the few non-accredited programs in the Dept, the Program will pursue COAPRT accreditation. Department & School admin support this decision. 	<p>The TR program could benefit from a strategic visioning process separate from the Recreation Education program to clearly define the future of TR education at Lehman.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If feasible, consider an objective (outside) facilitator to guide and debrief the visioning process. • The TR program should develop its own specific mission, vision, & program goals appropriate to its resources, student body, & setting. These should dovetail with the Dept, School, & College missions, & should be readily available to all internal & external stakeholders via electronic, digital, & print materials. • Once clearly stated mission/vision/goals have been developed for TR program, long-range planning with Recreation Education faculty could follow to explore the big picture of COAPRT accreditation across the two programs (see Recommendation

<p>acquire professional skill in the delivery of services in health, nutrition, & health services admin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program mission is to educate students to be competent prof who provide quality services in range of recreation & leisure settings. Program committed to providing outstanding curriculum taught by except. faculty, enhancing students' lives through learning & preprofessional experiences, collaborating w/ pract in the field through internships & research, & advancing knowledge of discipline through scholarly work. 	<p>in history, science, & philosophy.</p> <p>Goal II: Demonstrate the ability to design, implement, & evaluate services that facilitate targeted human experience & that embrace personal & cultural dimensions of diversity.</p> <p>Goal III: Demonstrate entry-level knowledge about operations & strategic management admin in park, recreation, tourism, or/or related professions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program engages students in professional development through participation in NYSTRA (ie, annual conferences, faculty who are leaders in NYSTRA, ATRA, etc). • As Lehman is a HSI, the Program values contributions of a multicultural student body. Faculty address unique learning needs of students who require flexible & non-traditional learning environments (ie, classes meet 1 day/week to meet commuting needs of students & adjunct faculty). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lehman's website is challenging to navigate & error noted in the "Future Students" tab on Admissions webpage, "Majors" tab, which only lists the Rec Ed major https://www.lehman.edu/admissions/major-department-phone-directory.php 	<p>2 in the next section on "Curriculum").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a thorough review/audit of all of electronic, digital, & print materials for accuracy. Consider ways to increase TR program visibility on School & Dept websites. Develop marketing strategy that capitalizes on Lehman's advantage as the only city-wide B.S. degree in TR.
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Activities & Strategic Priorities	Charge 1: Has the program aligned its activities with the college/school’s mission & strategic priorities (academic, research, service) & have these activities helped the college to achieve its goals?	Charge 2: Are there external trends or conditions (academic, research, service) that <u>enhance</u> the program’s ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, and objectives?	Charge 3: Are there external trends or conditions (academic, research, service) that <u>threaten</u> the program’s ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, and objectives?	Recommendations Opportunities to mitigate and/or capitalize on external trends in preparation for program accreditation through COAPRT
Academic Activities - Curriculum				
<p>The B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation program is a 52-credit major (120 credits with General Education and elective courses), and 1 of 7 programs of study in the Dept of Health Sciences.</p> <p>The TR program prepares students to work as recreational therapists and clinicians in a wide range of healthcare and human service settings, as described in the previous section.</p> <p>Students pursuing the B.S. in TR expect to pursue national certification by meeting educational and experiential requirements of NCTRC®, and state licensure as applicable by law. Note: NY State does not currently have licensure for TR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The B.S. in TR is 1 of 2 bachelor’s degrees in the Recreation Education and Therapy program, & operates across 3 pathways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 4-year Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. (TRE-BS) 2. The 4-year Macaulay Honors College, Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. (MHCTRE-BS) 3. The 2-year ACE, Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. (THR-BS) • The other B.S. is Recreation Education (40 credits), in which students may choose to specialize in TR, but are not eligible for credentialing (CTRS). These students take 3 TR courses within the TR program (REC 325, REC 421, REC 425). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lehman is the only 4-year college in the city with a B.S. program in TR. Given the flexibility of the 3 pathway approach to earning a BS, a significant opportunity presents itself in marketing the degree; the TR program has a strong reputation with no competitors inside the city. • A discernable strength of the TR program is its unique structure as a part of the CUNY system, which includes a joint degree program with Bronx Community College, and multiple articulation agreements with associate degree programs in the community college system (e.g., LaGuardia, Hostos, Kingsborough, & a future agreement with the Borough of Manhattan). The Program also leverages a number of external transfer students from the SUNY system on an annual basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two B.S. degrees within one Program is an atypical structure, and a bit confusing for an “outsider” to understand. The two B.S. degrees, coupled with the complexities of TR specialization within the B.S. in Recreation Education program, & various minors, make it challenging to navigate & understand the Program structure. • Internal stakeholder feedback solicited during the site visit conveyed a universal concern about the need for more supervised, structured, practical experiences prior to the capstone TR internship experience. Stakeholders articulated the need for exposure to a broader range of service settings and populations, occurring earlier in the curriculum, and designed to support a graduated 	<p>1. If the program pursues COAPRT accreditation, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a TR-specific Management course per COAPRT 7.03 standard (Management & Admin of TR Services) • Additional fieldwork experiences earlier in the curriculum/prior to the internship (i.e., practicum, clinical labs, service-learning experiences) in line with COAPRT 7.04 standard. • Establish an Advisory Board with broad professional representation across service settings & populations. Should meet a minimum of x1/year to inform & advise curriculum development. • Syllabi should use a consistent template (format) across all courses, including courses taught by adjunct faculty.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2 B.S. degrees share 4 common courses (REC 200, REC 210, REC 302, REC 387), which form a strong foundation in leisure history, philosophy, & theory; leadership, administrative, & research skills for application in a variety of direct line & management-level positions. Although not referred to as a “core” in program materials, these 4 courses appear to comprise a program core, which bodes well for program accreditation. A “core” is a hallmark of program efficiency, as faculty resources & expertise can be shared across programs, & students can be funneled from various program tracks into common courses, resulting in higher enrollments. In addition to the 4 common courses, the TR program also requires the following educational and experiential requirements, which meet NCTRC’s standards: 	<p>This unique structure has created a “farm system” of students who wish to pursue the B.S. in TR, which other 4-year TR programs across the country are only just starting to consider. Lehman’s TR program is ahead of the curve in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current number of majors (400) in the B.S. in TR program is quite robust compared to other 4-year TR degree programs across the country; however, this number should be qualified. The Self-Study Report indicates: <i>...as of Fall 2020, there are 400 students currently matriculating in the B.S. in TR program, which has increased from 181 students in Fall 2016.</i> This number is incongruent with the number of majors reflected on the <i>Majors Enrollment</i> web page, which reports <i>155 TR majors in the fall of 2020.</i> (https://www.lehman.edu/institutional-research/interactive-factbook.php) Source: Lehman’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment <i>Interactive Factbook</i> (https://www.lehman.edu/institutional-research/interactive-factbook.php). 	<p>progression of competencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student feedback during the site visit conveyed appreciation for the diverse, dedicated, & experienced faculty who are viewed as student centered. Students pointed to the quality of instruction among adjunct faculty. Although students articulated appreciation for dedicated faculty who are engaged professionally, they did articulate dissatisfaction with communication and advising, particularly around internship requirements, especially as fieldwork was disrupted or postponed as a result of the COVID pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a curriculum mapping activity to identify primary & secondary courses that address accreditation standards. Assess redundancies & overreliance of courses in meeting competencies. Increase number of structured, outcome-driven fieldwork experiences to improve students’ ability to apply learning in diverse practice settings. <p>2. Due to the complexities of the TR program structure, a clearer articulation of the different pathways to the B.S. in TR should be included in all public facing materials, including web pages, undergrad catalog, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, a description of the Recreation Education and Therapy program only appears on the Recreation Education webpage. If a prospective student navigates directly to the Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. webpage, they are only able to access the curriculum requirements, without any description of the degree, the relationship with the Recreation Education program, the Dept of Health Sciences, and the School of Health Sciences, Human Services, and Nursing.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6 TR-specific courses (REC 221, 322, 324, 325, 421, 425) (new NCTRC standard as of Jan 2021). ○ Supplemental coursework: Anatomy & Physiology, Human Growth & Development, General Psychology, & Abnormal Psychology ○ A 14-week, 560 hour internship experience. The <i>Lehman College Internship Manual</i> includes comprehensive details for this experience. The TR internship is 9 credits comprising REC 470 (4 cr) and REC 471 (5 cr). ○ The program offers a Recreation Minor (12 cr), in which TR is an option. The program is also part of an interdisciplinary Developmental Disabilities Minor (REC 221, REC 330), Geriatrics Minor (REC 325), & Youth Services Minor (REC 210, REC 324). 	<p>The reviewer clarified this disparity with Dr. Eubank during the meeting with TR Program Directors; the “400 majors” number used in the Self-Study Report includes <u>ALL</u> students enrolled in the TR program through the 3 degree pathways (TRE-BS, MHCTRE-BS, THR-BS). Clarity & consistency in messaging should be addressed in public materials, especially given the significant number of external stakeholders participating in the joint degree program and articulation agreements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bronx is a hub of healthcare; ample field-based learning opportunities are located in the vicinity during non-pandemic conditions. • The TR internship is a time-intensive field experience that fosters engaged citizenship & commitment to public service, The Program has strong relationships with TR fieldwork sites in the city, especially those affiliated with its adjunct faculty & alumni. As one alumni noted during the interview, “If you are working as a CTRS in healthcare in NYC, there is a good chance you are a Lehman alumni.” 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further, the “more info” hyperlink on the Faculty page of the Dept of Health Sciences is not active, which does not allow for a review of faculty expertise (unless this is a result of an incompatible reviewer browser?).
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Activities & Strategic Priorities	Student Learning Outcomes for Program Accreditation & Credentialing	Does the Program Provide Sufficient Assessment Evidence of Student Learning?	Are the Assessment Plans and the Assessment Measures Appropriate?	Recommendations Opportunities to mitigate and/or capitalize on external trends in preparation for program accreditation through COAPRT
Academic Activities – Student Learning Outcomes				
<p>In examining the TR program for evidence of student learning outcomes, the reviewer explored 2 primary questions, which are critical for accreditation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the program provide sufficient assessment evidence of student learning? 2. Are the assessment plans and the assessment measures appropriate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision to pursue Program accreditation aligns with the <i>Strategic Directions for Lehman College 2010-2020</i>, Goal 1, Objective 1.2: <i>Foster a culture of continuous assessment focused on evaluating student learning outcomes to improve academic programs</i> • Program accreditation & credentialing drive the development & documentation of student learning outcomes for TR education. Lehman’s TR program currently adheres to educational & experiential standards of NCTRC. COAPRT further establishes benchmarks for student learning outcomes that relate directly to the B.S. in TR program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Grades: Students must earn a C- or above in all courses required for the TR major and minor. A grade of D is acceptable for TR majors in one of the following courses: BIO 181, PSY 166, PSY 234 and HIN 268. • The Self-Study (pp. 12-16) reveals a concerted effort to identify relevant learning outcomes, identification of courses wherein those outcomes can be evaluated, & efforts to streamline course content to improve academic success. Efforts to evaluate these outcomes are currently ongoing. ○ The progression and content of TR courses provides evidence of compliance with NCTRC standards. To meet COAPRT standards for assessment of learning outcomes, the Program will need to address the 7.0 series in the COAPRT <i>Guidelines for Learning Outcomes for Therapeutic Recreation Education</i> (Revised April 2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Program establishes & assesses annual targets related to learning outcomes in specific courses (Tables 4.1- 4.4 in Self-Study). Identification of those learning outcomes appears a bit arbitrary (p. 12 of Self-Study). Evidence includes: ○ Student performance on course exams & assignments. ○ Internship surveys completed by students & site supervisors. The Program does not describe how often internship surveys are administered or the sampling procedure. ○ NCTRC exam passing rates which are monitored annually for aggregate passing rates (per School), & student performance per exam content area. ○ Student satisfaction surveys. Program does not describe how often survey is administered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program should begin reviewing COAPRT’s <i>Guidelines for Learning Outcomes for Therapeutic Recreation Education</i> (Revised April 2021). The TR standards are located in the 7.0 series. https://accreditationcouncil.org/Portals/0/Documents/TR%20Resources/TR_Guidelines_for_Learning_Outcomes_2021_Final_4-12.pdf?ver=2021-04-14-115536-997 • The Program can benefit from developing robust learning outcome data collection mechanisms, a regular data collection administration timeline and analysis plan, and consider broadening stakeholder groups from which to solicit feedback, including students, faculty, alumni, fieldwork site supervisors, and employers.

External Review Charge 4: Is the program’s infrastructure (human, physical, financial) sufficient to achieve its vision, mission, and goals?	Financial Infrastructure	Human Infrastructure (Faculty)	Physical Infrastructure	Recommendations Opportunities to mitigate and/or capitalize on infrastructure in preparation for program accreditation through COAPRT
<p>For clarity, it should be noted that many infrastructure deficits are not generated at Program or Departmental levels, but are nonetheless necessarily addressed at those levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding cuts by state and city governments for public higher education is an external trend that threatens the educational aspirations of many public universities. Lehman College has experienced budget cuts & hiring freezes that can pose a threat to generating adequate funding for undergrad & graduate education that is commensurate with their goal “as the college of choice in the region” (Strategic Vision for Lehman College, 2010-2020). It should be noted that every stakeholder interview made reference to a “lack of resources” as a constraint in realizing the Program’s vision. To bring this to the TR Program level, a lack of resources manifests in the need for dedicated clinical laboratory space and equipment, faculty office space, classroom technology, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TR program has 3 full-time tenure-track faculty & 6 adjunct faculty with diverse areas of expertise & professional backgrounds. Collectively, the TR faculty have a distinguished record of professional & community engagement at the state, regional, & national levels. Drs. Kunstler & Archer have retired & the TR program has successfully filled those tenure-track lines & added 1 more line. Numerous stakeholders noted the impact of Dr. Kunstler’s retirement, as she is regarded as “the heart and soul of the TR program at Lehman.” According to the Self-Study, of the 3 full-time faculty, only Dr. Adams is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS); however, during the interview, Dr. Hyangmi Kim indicated she is also certified. This should be included on program materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As this was a virtual campus visit, the reviewer only saw the campus facilities through the Virtual Tour on the Lehman website. The physical resources (e.g. campus grounds, academic buildings, library, recreation facilities, technology) appear sufficient for the existing structure of the TR program. The physical spaces are neat, inviting, & appear conducive to their purpose. However, the faculty noted a lack of private office space & shared/limited classroom technology & equipment as significant constraints to instructional and advising/mentoring effectiveness. In the Self-Study, faculty discuss the need for dedicated clinical space & equipment in which to conduct on-campus instructional labs. The reviewer was not able to assess the library resources. Lehman has an Office of Student Disability Services, which provides access to all programs/curricula for students with disabilities. Lehman has 2 tutoring centers The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) provides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate dedicated and private office space for TR faculty. Improve classroom technology & equipment, especially for adjunct faculty who may teach outside of hours in which IT staff is available. Consider opportunities to maximize clinical resources by incorporating cross-disciplinary educational experiences with Lehman’s Recreation Facilities (Student Affairs), the Speech and Language Lab, the Child Care Center, and/or the IHCE Clinical Simulation lab at NYU. Consider opportunities to “grow your own” adjunct faculty to address the current shortage in doctorally-prepared faculty Consider capitalizing on the existing expertise of the CUNY Institute for Health Equity to develop applied research endeavors among faculty and students.

	<p>additional faculty resources dedicated to fieldwork coordination to meet the demands of over 400 TR majors (or 155 TR majors if using major numbers from Lehman’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first 5 years of tenure track appointment, junior faculty teach a 18-credit load/year with 24-credit hour total release time over the first 5 years for advising graduate & undergraduate students, service, & research activities. • Given the high demands on faculty teaching & advising loads, supervising internships, & graduate mentoring in research activities, it is remarkable how faculty free up sufficient time to engage in productive and high quality scholarly endeavors. • It should be noted that every stakeholder interview made reference to the need for additional faculty support for fieldwork coordination. Although a recent part-time resource has been allocated for this purpose, the concern persists. 	<p>appointment-based and drop-in tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing, as well as general writing skills. The Science Learning Center (SCL) provides drop-in tutoring for natural and computer science courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there potential applied learning opportunities between the TR program & Lehman’s Recreation Facilities (Student Affairs), the Speech and Language Lab, and/or the Child Care Center? Does the TR program anticipate leveraging the IHCE Clinical Simulation lab at NYU once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted? • The reviewer observed Dr. Eubanks’ scholarship connections with the CUNY Institute for Health Equity. Does the CIHE offer additional opportunities to collaborate with TR faculty and students on research and/or applied projects? 	
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Charge 5	Emerging Needs of Field	Is Curriculum Meeting Emerging Needs?	Moving Towards Accreditation	Recommendations
<p>External Review Charge 5: Is the unit/program prepared to meet emerging needs of the field, including moving toward accreditation with the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATRA’s Higher Education Committee conducted a mixed methods study with practitioners, educators, students, & credentialing & accrediting bodies to reinvestigate educational requirements for entry-level education in TR. The reviewer served on the Task Force. The central finding suggests that the most current and pressing need in higher education is to improve the quality and consistency of the bachelor’s degree in TR (Craig et al., 2020). Five mixed method results support the central finding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entry-level education should be the bachelor’s degree with increased & improved fieldwork experiences. 2. TR curricula need to show consistency in learning outcomes that reflect entry-level competencies in field. 3. Incorporate new & increasing levels of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TR program’s desire to pursue COPART accreditation advances the central finding of the ATRA study, as it attempts to improve the quality & consistency of the B.S. degree in TR. Accreditation also requires programs to show consistency in learning outcomes, and develop structures to facilitate high quality fieldwork experiences for students. The Program’s decision to pursue accreditation shows a commitment to advancement of the profession. • As noted in the Self-Study, the TR faculty are aware of the need to improve NCTRC exam passing rates among its graduates (rates are currently below the national averages). They have added a new course to address assessment and treatment planning competencies, and are using specific strategies to help students with the format and structure of the exam (ie, structuring NCTRC-like test questions on course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COAPRT’s <i>Guidelines for Learning Outcomes for Therapeutic Recreation Education 7.0 Series</i> are derived from existing professional standards documents, and TR curriculum research, and reflect the focus on student learning outcomes desired by accrediting bodies. • COAPRT accreditation provides a useful mechanism for broadly evaluating recreation and leisure curricula. If, however, additional rigor and detailed outcomes assessment is desired, the TR program may wish to consider another accreditation option specific to allied health - the Council on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education (CARTE). Seeking this type of accreditation would be in line with a “medical model” framework akin to sister disciplines such as occupational or physical therapy. 	<p>1. Mechanisms for preparing programs for accreditation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training, mentoring & networking to support the development of a comprehensive self-study process and report. • Providing support/resources to strengthen curricula & field-based learning opportunities • Valuing, recognizing, and rewarding educators/programs with emerging & sustained success in academic excellence • Actively engaging practitioners and alumni in accreditation processes & developing learning outcomes in curricula • Providing up-to-date competency data to faculty so that programs are teaching contemporary and emergent practices.

	<p>competencies into B.S. & M.S. TR curricula.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Improve the infrastructure for a graduated progression of quality fieldwork experiences. 5. Determine effective models that will ensure quality, consistency, access, & affordability in graduate education to advance practice & the profession. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As U.S. population ages, more people will need recreational therapists (RTs) to help treat age-related injuries & illnesses and to help healthy seniors remain social & active in their communities. Therefore, RTs who specialize in working with the elderly or who earn certification in geriatric therapy may have the best job prospects. • RTs are also needed to plan and lead programs designed to maintain overall wellness through participation in activities such as camps, day trips, and sports. Therapists will 	<p>exams; providing exam preparation workshops). TR faculty are also aware of the need to improve their structured, outcome-driven fieldwork experiences to improve students' ability to apply learning in diverse practice settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note to the preparer of the Self-Study Report - comparison of Lehman's NCTRC exam passing rates to national mean passing rates should ground the discussion about this metric in the Report. • In consistently increasing proportions, CTRSs are very likely to find employment within the older adult sector. According to NCTRC's Professional Profile (2019), 28% of CTRSs work with the older adult population, and 51% work with neurodevelopmental disability populations (IDD, autism). These stats bode well for Lehman's Geriatrics minor, and the Developmental Disabilities Minor. 		
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	<p>increasingly be utilized in helping veterans manage service-related conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and/or combat-related injuries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nationally, there are not enough doctorally-prepared faculty to teach & conduct research in TR programs. As a result of this deficit, competition for the field's best & brightest is fierce. As universities attempt to ramp up to address increasing enrollments, many are experiencing failed searches & using stop-gap mechanisms to fully staff their programs. This often translates into hiring masters-prepared, instructor level staff, potentially hampering opportunities for faculty to engage in scholarly work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lehman has recently hired 3 full-time tenure-track faculty who are working towards tenure and promotion. The CTRS credential is important among TR faculty. 		
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Summary of Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities of the Lehman College B.S. in TR Program

Strengths

The B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation program has many strengths, chief among them are the dedicated and talented faculty (full-time & adjunct) who embrace their role as educators and professionals with pride and enthusiasm. Faculty, students, and alumni display a deep sense of pride in Lehman College and readily embrace their responsibility in advancing the mission of the College. The TR faculty are well-respected across the state and region, and on a national level. They are viewed as caring, student-centered educators who value the unique contributions of Lehman's diverse study body in improving the health and wellness of the Bronx and greater NYC communities.

The TR undergraduate program enjoys robust enrollments and is well-positioned to seek program accreditation through COAPRT. Lehman is the only College in the city with a four-year TR degree program. The market for drawing students for the B.S. in TR is potentially vast, especially in light of the joint degree program and numerous articulation agreements with various community colleges. Lehman is ahead of the curve in this regard.

Challenges

The major challenge to the realization of the vision for undergraduate TR education at Lehman College is not the ability or motivation to succeed, but rather the resource challenges (budget, human, physical infrastructure) that must be addressed to make this vision feasible.

For example, all stakeholder groups interviewed for this external review identified the need for additional faculty resources to help develop and facilitate high quality student fieldwork experiences. As noted in a previous section of this report, successful field-based experiences underpin TR students' ability to meet the benchmarks of entry-level practice. TR clinical education requires investment of significant resources for training materials, learning laboratory space, advanced practice faculty, and quality fieldwork and internship placements, to name a few. The coordination of sound, appropriate, and practical field placement experiences often requires extensive faculty time to identify, vet, and cultivate these critical partner relationships.

Lastly, the 2020-2021 academic year has been extraordinarily challenging given the restrictions posed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. As the U.S. economy begins to recover and life slowly returns to a pre-pandemic "normal," higher education should follow suit and resume in-person and on-campus activities.

Opportunities

Time is money, so the expression goes. By instituting "Accelerated" matriculation options for undergraduate students to obtain a master's degree within five years (4+1 model), the TR program can simultaneously maximize its undergraduate enrollments while forecasting and controlling graduate program enrollments.

Continue to invest time, money and other resources (e.g. college-wide infrastructure) that provide full-time tenure track faculty with necessary supports and time to engage in the type and volume of scholarly productivity associated with a top tier program. It is vital to ensure the retention of key faculty by bolstering their reserve and resilience so they can take on scholarly endeavors at a high level. There is no guarantee that any faculty member will stay at a given university for any length of time; however, a faculty member who feels needed and supported by their respective institution is much more likely to stay and invest their energies where their contributions are recognized and valued.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this external review to inform your B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation program moving forward. It was a pleasure meeting your faculty, students, administration, and alumni of your program.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss any specific aspect of this report, please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,



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References

- Craig, P. J., Hawkins, B. L., Anderson, L., Ashton-Forrester, C., & Carter, M. (2020). The future of RT/TR education: Results from the ATRA Higher Education Task Force study [Special issue, *ATRA Annual in TR*, vol. 27]. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*. 54(4), 366–390. <https://doi.org/10.18666/TRJ-2020-V54-I4-10427>
- National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification (2019). *CTRS professional profile*. <https://www.nctrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CTRSPROfessionalProfile.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2020). *Occupational employment and wage statistics: 29-1125 Recreational Therapists*. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes291125.htm#st>

Appendix B: Sources of Information Used for the External Program Review

Report and Artifacts Reviewed	Stakeholders Interviewed via Zoom
<p>2020-2021 Therapeutic Recreation Program Self-Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided to reviewer in an electronic format by Dean Elgloria Harrison • CVs of Tenure Track Faculty included in Self-Study <p>Document Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabi and Internship Manual shared electronically via Lehman College Dropbox folder • Degree Program Pathways for B.S. in TR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4-year Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. (TRE-BS) ○ 4-year Macaulay Honors College, Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. (MHCTRE-BS) ○ 2-year ACE, Therapeutic Recreation, B.S. (THR-BS) • ACHIEVING THE VISION By Building on a Strong Foundation: Strategic Directions for Lehman College 2010-2020 (condensed version) https://www.lehman.edu/provost/documents/achieving-the-vision.pdf <p>Website Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lehman College, CUNY • Lehman College Virtual Tour • School of Health Sciences, Human Services, and Nursing • Department of Health Sciences • Recreation Education and Therapy program webpages • Lehman’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Interactive Factbook:</i> https://www.lehman.edu/institutional-research/interactive-factbook.php ○ <i>Majors Enrollment:</i> https://www.lehman.edu/institutional-research/interactive-factbook.php <p>2019-2021 Undergraduate Bulletin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.S. Therapeutic Recreation (52 cr) • B.S. Recreation Education (40 cr) • B.S. Interdisciplinary Geriatric Team Option (40 cr) • Recreation Minor • Developmental Disabilities Minor • Geriatrics Health Minor • Youth Services Minor 	<p>Therapeutic Recreation faculty (full-time & part-time)</p> <p>Therapeutic Recreation Program Directors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jake Eubank (Undergrad Program) • Dr. Hyangmi Kim (Graduate Program) • Dr. Em Adams (Fieldwork Coordinator) <p>Dr. Gul Sonmez, Chair, Department of Health Sciences</p> <p>Dr. Elgloria Harrison, Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Human Services, and Nursing</p> <p>Undergraduate majors in Therapeutic Recreation during class meeting - <i>REC 425: Processes and Techniques of Therapeutic Recreation</i>, with Professor Shari Wall</p> <p>Alumni of Therapeutic Recreation Program</p>

Appendix C: Virtual Site Visit Itinerary



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External Review of B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation

Virtual Visit Itinerary – Dr. Patricia Craig

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

- 4:30pm-5:00pm -- Meeting with B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation alumni
Zoom Link: <https://lehman-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/84644532655?pwd=MEtSZUtPZzBMN0lwdzRVZGtDNzVkZz09>
Meeting ID: 846 4453 2655
Passcode: 735828

- 5:00pm-6:00pm -- Tuesday meeting with Therapeutic Recreation Faculty (full-time and part-time).
Zoom Link: <https://lehman-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/81793969334?pwd=eEJSUDlpNGRLL3VhM2hRUUt1ZDlxQT09>
Meeting ID: 817 9396 9334
Passcode: 608223

- 6:00pm-8:00pm -- Meeting with B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation majors (6:00pm-6:30pm) and REC 425 Class Observation (Professor Shari Wall).
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84829536697>
Meeting ID: 848 2953 6697

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

- 9:00am-9:30am -- Meeting with Dr. Elgloria Harrison, Dean of School of Health Sciences, Human Services and Nursing.
Zoom Link: <https://lehman-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/83299249022?pwd=OS9Zb0oreCt0aHk5TmRaRHM1cWorUT09>
Meeting ID: 832 9924 9022
Passcode: 448825

- 9:45am-10:45am -- Meeting with full-time faculty/program directors, Dr. Jake Eubank (undergraduate program director), Dr. Hyangmi Kim (graduate program director, and Dr. Em Adams (field work coordinator)
Zoom Link: <https://lehman-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/84052977794?pwd=K2VwcUxRSHhGeGd0L1lnNjNKcEJRUT09>
Meeting ID: 840 5297 7794
Passcode: 565654

- 11:00am-11:30am -- Meeting with Dr. Gul Sonmez, Chair of Department of Health Sciences
Zoom Link: <https://lehman-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/87876692040?pwd=Y1Z3WmxuQjBNUDZmdU1UTiY5OGhjdz09>
Meeting ID: 878 7669 2040
Passcode: 927077

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