



COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Note: Enter "NA" wherever data are not applicable or not available for the program under review.

Program Characteristics

Academic Program Name: **Accounting**

Degree: **Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)**

Program CIP Code: **52.0301**

School and Department: **C. Lamar and Ann Wright School of Business (WSOB)**

Time frame for this review: **2013-2017**

Date of last internal review: December 2014

Current date program reviewed for this report: December 2018

Program Goal Statement and Student Learning Outcomes

Program goal statement:

Accounting students will acquire general business knowledge and be prepared for employment in the field of public and private accounting.

Program outcomes:

1. General business knowledge
2. Preparation for employment in the field of accounting
3. High job placement rate in accounting and reported fields.
4. High employer satisfaction with accounting graduates.
5. High graduate satisfaction with accounting program.

Student learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of recording and reporting business transactions.
2. Prepare and interpret financial statements.
3. Understand auditing procedures.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of planning, budgeting, and control processes.
5. Understand federal and state tax compliance procedures.
6. Recognize the importance of ethical integrity in the accounting profession.



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Brief Assessment of Previous Program Review

Outcome of previous program review (brief narrative statement).

Overall, the initial review performed on the accounting program found it to be a necessary, important, and viable program among the Wright School of Business majors. The major concern that was expressed in the prior program review was in staffing. The accounting program had experienced turnover in faculty over the period covered by the last review (2009/10). Accounting is a competitive field with high salaries, making it challenging for smaller programs to recruit and retain qualified faculty under the AACSB guidelines.

What improvements have occurred since the last program review or assessment?

Since the last program review, leadership in the Wright School of Business has focused on stabilizing the faculty employed in the accounting program. One individual hired completed his DBA at Kennesaw and left for a better offer at the University of South Alabama. Another faculty member recruited away from a smaller university in Alabama left to return to that university. Finally, a new hire with a PhD from Jackson State University hired in 2016 left in 2018 to relocate closer to family.

The leadership hired two faculty members, one in fall 2017 and another recently for spring of 2019 that hold doctorates with AACSB post-doctoral bridge certifications through the University of Florida. That will leave the accounting program with two faculty members meeting the scholarly academic (SA) classification requirements, one in the instructional practitioner (IP) classification, and a fourth in ABD status at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Three of the faculty hold current CPA licenses and the newest faculty member has a Florida application pending with the State Board of Accountancy.

The faculty searches focused on finding candidates that were qualified and expressed a sincere desire to relocate to the Dalton, Georgia, area with the goal of reducing faculty turnover.

What changes or revisions have been made to the program, its curriculum, or its program/student learning outcomes since the last program review? Please include a follow-up discussion of the previous review's action plan?

No changes have been made to the program goal statement, program outcomes, or program specific student learning outcomes since the last review. We did make two changes to the accounting curriculum.

First, we added ACCT 3800, Understanding Financial Statements, to the list of courses being offered in April 2013. This course is required in the management major, is an elective in the finance and applied economics major and is an elective in the accounting major. It is offered during both fall and spring semesters.

Second, we changed ACCT 3400, Auditing and Attestation, to ACCT 4701 with the same course name. The change was made to elevate the course to a senior level course consistent with its role as the capstone course in the accounting sequence.

Lastly, as noted in the previous section, the action plan for adding two qualified faculty to accounting has been achieved as of December 2018. Also Associate Professor Jamie Connors is ABD and working to complete her dissertation in a timely fashion.



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Student Demographics

Enrollment	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Headcount	223	213	227	209	205	-8.1
FTE	192.5	186.3	199	180.9	178	-7.5
Enrolled Full-time	148	143	161	142	134	-9.5
Enrolled Part-time	75	70	66	67	71	-5.3
Female	114	109	117	111	112	-1.8
Male	109	104	110	98	93	-14.7
Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian	3	2	3	4	6	100
Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	1	5	2	8	6	500
Black/African-American	11	10	10	8	8	-2.7
Hispanic	69	66	73	67	69	0
Multi-racial	0	0	0	0	0	¹ DNE
Undeclared	8	10	12	20	4	-50
White	131	120	127	102	112	-14.5

Analysis and comments on student demographics.

Overall enrollment during the current period under review is down in accounting by 8.1% (7.5% for FTE). But enrollment is still above the mark in fall 2009 by 18.5%. Total enrollment peaked at 227 in fall 2015. In terms of ethnicity, enrollment of white students declined during the period by 14.5%, but enrollment of Hispanic students remained steady and strong, making up over 33% of the accounting student body. The ratio of male to female decreased from 109/114 to 93/112. Females make up an increasing proportion of the student body in accounting and enrollment among females has remained stable, while we have experienced a decline in male student enrollment. Enrollment in the accounting program has been negatively affected by the strong economy. More potential students chose to work over returning to college. This is a trend reported by many business programs nationwide.

¹ DNE is a mathematical abbreviation for "Does Not Exist" often used for undefined expressions.



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
School (not Department) faculty teaching in program (excluding Areas A through E)	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Full-time program faculty	4	5	5	5	5	25
Part-time program faculty	1	1	1	2	2	100
Total program faculty	5	6	6	7	7	40
Percent of program classes taught by full-time program faculty	93.9	100	100	94.4	88.2	-6.12
Gender (full-time and part-time faculty)	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Male	2	1	2	3	3	50
Female	3	5	4	4	4	33
Race/Ethnicity (full-time and part-time faculty)	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Black/African-American	0	1	1	1	1	DNE
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Multi-racial	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Undeclared	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
White	5	5	5	6	6	20
Tenure Status (full-time faculty)	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Tenured	1	1	2	2	2	100
On-tenure track	1	3	3	2	2	100
Non-tenure track	2	1	0	1	1	-50
Rank (full-time faculty)	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Professor	0	0	1	1	0	DNE
Associate Professor	1	2	1	2	2	100
Assistant Professor	1	2	3	1	2	100
Instructor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer	2	1	0	1	1	-50



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality

Highest degree (full-time faculty)	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% Change
Doctorate	0	1	1	2	2	DNE
Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Master's	4	4	4	3	3	-25
Bachelor's	0	0	0	0	0	DNE
Associate's/Other	0	0	0	0	0	DNE

Provide additional details, analysis, and comments regarding faculty indicators of program quality.

While we have experienced faculty turnover during the review period, we have been able to ensure that most of our course sections are being taught by full-time faculty in the Wright School of Business and within the accounting program. See the narrative on page two for additional information related to improvements in faculty staffing. New faculty are required to participate in a year-long professional development series.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

Student Input	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Mean ACT score	20.8	20.2	20.1	19.8	19.7	-5.3
Mean SAT score	478	474	473	456	467	-2.3

If applicable to your degree program, provide any additional external quality assurance data/information or results (e.g., professional accreditation results, National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], market rankings, etc.).

We do not track any market rankings at the program level. The College tracks metrics at the institutional level instead as part of an overall brand management strategy. We monitor the qualifications of incoming business students through periodic advisement. However, the business programs are open access. Incoming freshmen may self-select into the WSOB and into any of the majors we offer. Business programs are popular college majors because of the belief they are more professional/vocational in nature. We monitor student performance by tracking grade-point averages, progression-toward-degree, and frequency of withdrawals by individual students from courses. This is done on a case-by-case basis among the faculty advisors. The Wright School of Business also employs an academic advisor to work with freshman and sophomore students.

Another challenge we face is tracking post-graduation successes such as employment offers, graduate school acceptances, and passage of licensing and certification programs. We are working to develop the capability to track some of that information. Realistically, it may not be possible to track it with anything near 100% participation. We are reliant on student/alumni cooperation to provide us with that information once they have graduated from Dalton State College.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

Student Output	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% Change
Exit scores on national/state licensure (If applicable)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	DNE
Graduating majors' mean GPA	3.16	3.29	3.37	3.24	3.4	7.6
Employment rate of graduates (if available)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	DNE
Number of students entering graduate/professional programs	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current program outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

Program Outcomes 1 and 2: The Wright School of Business employs WEAVE as an internal assessment tool and undertakes assessments on courses on a regular schedule. This past year, four courses were assessed. ACCT 3800, Understanding Financial Statements, ACCT 4701, Auditing and Attestation, ACCT 3300, Tax Accounting and Reporting I, and ACCT 3200, Intermediate Accounting II. The results of the assessment demonstrated that students achieved the first program outcome. Course level GPA in the first three courses exceeded the 3.0 standard. All students in the fourth course exceeded the standard performance (70%) on an ethics case.

The WSOB also administers the Major Field Test (MFT) given through Educational Testing Services (ETS) to all students in their last graduation semester. The results for the last year of the review period found that instruction in ACCT 2101, ACCT 2102, and ACCT 3800 lead to an overall average on 17 questions related to financial and managerial accounting that exceeded the national average by nearly 2%.

The WEAVE and MFT results support the trend noted above, that our graduating students' GPAs have increased 7.6% over the five-year review period. The data show that our accounting students are acquiring the required general business knowledge and are prepared for entry-level employment as accountants.

Program Outcomes 3, 4, and 5: A recurring challenge we face is collecting data on our graduates' employment history, graduate school acceptance, and CPA exam results. We recently administered surveys to current graduating seniors and alumni, but low response rates render the results insufficient to draw any conclusions on the program outcomes.

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current student learning outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

SLO 1: Demonstrate knowledge of recording and reporting business transactions.

SLO 2: Prepare and interpret financial statements.

SLO 3: Understand auditing procedures.

SLO 4: Demonstrate knowledge of planning, budgeting, and control processes.

SLO 5: Understand federal and state tax compliance procedures.

SLO 6: Recognize the importance of ethical integrity in the accounting profession.

We are unable to assess the student learning outcomes in the current cycle. The accounting discipline at DSC has experienced frequent turnover of faculty over the past five years. As of spring 2019 we have all positions filled and appear to be headed into a stable period. The prior period saw some normal administrative tasks



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not performed as they should have been. Planning, evaluating, and reporting on program level student learning outcomes is one of those tasks.

At the current time we do not have the data to assess these learning outcomes. As noted in this report, our students have been successful. The main concern is whether there are areas within accounting that need attention. One of our improvement efforts will be to review and update all program goals and student learning outcomes, and the course learning outcomes. The objective will be ensuring a logical, common-sense transition from the WSOB learning outcomes to the program and course student learning outcomes.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

If available, provide additional information and/or results of other indicators of quality related to student output such as completer satisfaction surveys, employer satisfaction surveys, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, completion and continuation rates, attrition rates, starting salaries of graduates, etc.

We recently began administering alumni and graduation surveys. Alumni survey data collected in fall of 2017 indicated that 80% of respondents found employment within 3 months of graduation. Nearly 60% reported having received a promotion due to their possession of a Dalton State College BBA degree. A survey of graduating seniors in fall of 2017 indicated that most students felt they had achieved the learning outcomes listed on page one of this document. The responses to a series of Likert scale questions, one for each outcome, ranged from 4.44 to 4.77 on a five-point scale (unsure to significantly increased). Over 90% of the students graduating in fall of 2017 reported they had a good or excellent perception of the program's quality, preparation, and value of their Dalton State College BBA degree. Over 88% reported they would be very or extremely likely to recommend our BBA degree program to others. Lastly, nearly 65% of alumni respondents indicated their currently salary between \$40,000 and \$80,000 per year. Nearly 10% reported annual salaries of \$100,000 or more.

Describe efforts undertaken to achieve and maintain curricular alignment within the program and currency to the discipline.

The Wright School of Business has a standing Curriculum Committee. A member from accounting serves on that committee and works with other faculty on the committee and with other accounting faculty to review the accounting curriculum, comparing to other colleges and universities in the USG. For example, the faculty are currently discussing a proposal to require ACCT 3600, Accounting Information Systems. A review of 20 other USG accounting programs indicated that 16 of the programs required an accounting information systems program in their core for the major. Another example of our efforts to keep the curriculum relevant is the increased inclusion of data analytics in all accounting courses. Students are being introduced to SAP enterprise resource planning software and skills in Excel and Access are being reinforced through projects and assignments in various courses. Finally, a focus on experiential learning is being incorporated into the accounting coursework. In the accounting information systems course, students conduct general accounting duties and prepare financial statements using a simulation from Armond Dalton. After completing the tax accounting and reporting course students participate in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Students, supervised by faculty, prepare over 400 returns each year for low-income individuals and families in the local community. These activities ensure our students are given an opportunity to learn through practice.

The other major emphasis in our program is the result of one of our own accounting faculty being appointed Assistant Dean of the WSOB. One of the programs assigned to the Assistant Dean is improving our internship program.



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Indicators of Measures of Viability

Internal Demand for the Program	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% Change
Number of students enrolled in the degree program	223	213	227	209	205	-8.1
Number of students who applied to the program (if applicable)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	DNE
Number of students admitted to the program (if applicable)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	DNE
Percent of classes taught by full-time faculty	93.9	100	100	94.4	88.2	-6.12

Describe additional details as deemed appropriate.

The data presented in this table mirrors data previously presented and discussed. See the narrative discussion on page three.



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Indicators of Measures of Productivity

Graduation	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% Change
Number of degrees conferred	33	22	40	30	25	-24.2
Total student credit hours earned	121.6	121	123	115	118	-3.0

Describe any institutional-specific factors impacting time to degree.

The measures above show declines in both the number of degrees conferred each fall graduation and the number of institutional credit hours they finish with. We considered both these trends carefully.

Students typically progress through the program in cohorts, taking their upper-division courses together over a two to three-year period. Due to the size of our program, typically about 25-40 students per cohort, it is sensitive to changes in enrollment due to students needing to repeat courses or change their majors. Based on faculty experiences at other institutions and at DSC, it is not unusual to see from 10 to 20% attrition in an accounting cohort.

The accounting program is rigid because of the required course sequences. It is also a rigorous subject for most students. It demands much of a student's time. The courses are quantitative, require excellent reading comprehension skills, along with writing, and critical thinking skills. Not all students are successful completing their first or second semester and must repeat courses or change majors.

We also note that students are not able to complete a full degree as day-time only, night-time only, or online only students. They must be able to take their courses during the times we offer them. The lives of our students' present us with significant scheduling challenges. We are not able to offer courses that will meet the scheduling needs of all or even most of our students. To assist students, we often must find them alternatives through the USG to help them complete their degrees. A few do transfer to other institutions, but we have not experienced high levels of that activity.

The administration closely monitors enrollment density in classes, which inhibits the Wright School of Business from offering two sections of required courses each term. Many larger schools can offer multiple sections of required courses and offer them every semester. We are not able to do either of those things consistently enough to meet student needs. We would need larger student enrollments and more faculty. We have been told by the President that enrollments are expected to be flat and that budgets will remain tight.

Therefore, the trends noted in the measures above are the result of several institutional issues tied directly to challenges based on our size. We are constantly evaluating alternatives to address these issues given the enrollment and budgetary limitations we operate under.



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Evidence of Program Viability

Based on evidence from ALL of the above information, data, and analysis, discuss whether continued resources should be devoted to this program. This discussion must be evidence-based. Your comments should consider external factors and address questions such as the following: Are your students getting jobs? What is the job outlook for graduates? Are students prepared for the jobs they get? How is the field changing? Are program faculty members in contact with employers and getting back feedback on graduates' job performance? Do employers state or suggest a need for changes in the program?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BSL) *Occupational Outlook Handbook* reports that as of 2017 the forecast for accountants with a bachelor's degree is growing faster than average at 10% over the period 2016-2026. The current average starting annual salary is \$69,350. The forecast indicates that a total of 139,900 new accountants will be needed over the 10-year period covered by the forecast.

The Northeast Georgia and Tennessee valley area is home to numerous large, medium, and small manufacturing firms in addition to the myriad other service and retail businesses that support the region's population. The need for accounting services is universal among the various types of business organizations. Dalton State College is in a good position, close to three of the largest flooring manufacturers in the world and only 30 minutes from many areas around Chattanooga. We are also located only 90 minutes from Atlanta and are within 2-3 hours of several other major metropolitan areas. The need for accountants exists.

Our own metrics indicate that we can produce a supply of about 25-40 new accounting graduates each year. The surveys we administered support that our students are being absorbed by the area's employers. We are still in the process of gathering data specifically on accounting graduates and the internships. A recent informal attempt to capture data through Facebook indicated that of 26 recent accounting graduates, 24 are currently employed in the field. Two are active CPA's and eight indicated plans to sit for the exam within the next five years. At least three have completed graduate school in accounting and several other indicate they are planning to attend graduate school in the immediate future.

Our graduates are employed in private and public accounting. The types of private businesses that employ them range from manufacturing firms, to healthcare, to nonprofit associations, and financial institutions. At least six reported working for area CPA firms. Our leadership team maintains close contact with regional employers through engagement in professional organizations, and through direct contact including personal visits, phone calls, and emails. The discussions indicate that they are pleased with Dalton State College graduates and plan to continue hiring them as needs arise.

Accounting is the backbone of most business programs across the country. It remains a vital and relevant field of study for students because of its analytical and quantitative emphasis. We anticipate that students will continue to self-select into the accounting major. Due to its challenge and rigor, many students are not able to complete the program and become a supply for other majors across the campus. An analysis of data of current accounting students indicates that of 185 currently declared accounting students, 110 are freshman and sophomore students, 75 are junior and senior students. Based on the evidence collected, we do not anticipate the accounting program to diminish.

Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Based upon this review, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

Strengths:

1. It is a popular initial major among those selecting entrance to the WSOB.
2. It is the second largest of the business program majors behind only management.
3. It maintains strong community connections through contacts with alumni and faculty participation in community service opportunities such as Kiwanis, United Way, and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.
4. Many graduates have been able to find professional level employment within 3 months of graduation.
5. Leadership is successfully connecting with area employers to increase internship opportunities.
6. Professionally and scholarly qualified full-time faculty teach almost all courses.
7. The School was awarded and is maintaining AACSB accreditation.

Weaknesses and concerns:

1. Shortage of financial resources. This is responsible for several areas of weakness or concern.
2. Challenges in recruiting and retaining academically qualified faculty in a highly competitive market place.
3. Absence of a graduate program in business or accounting allowing students to complete the requirements for CPA licensure. This alone would enhance our reputation and open potential avenues to financial resources. It also provides a supply of students for graduate assistantships, tutors, and supplemental instructors for undergraduate accounting courses.
4. Information on alumni and graduates that is critical to accreditation and future fund-raising activities.
5. Lack of courses in data analytics. This is the current trend and requires specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities. Financial resources are needed by our faculty to acquire and maintain the knowledge, skills, and abilities.
6. Lack of dedicated accounting computer lab.
7. Challenges in offering on demand testing through the Testing Center for all courses. This would increase program flexibility and is a trend among many colleges and universities. It helps alleviate instructional time pressures due to the quantity and rigor of the course materials.
8. Absence of a strategic plan for the major including update of the program mission, goals, and learning outcomes.



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Recommendations for Follow-Up and/or Action Plans (if needed)

Issue/Concern:

There are four areas that we will focus on over the next year.

First is improving our ability to connect with and remain in contact with alumni of the accounting program.

Second is leveraging technology to help faculty help our students deal with the quantity, rigor, and challenge of accounting.

Third is finding financial resources to deal with the weaknesses and maintain our core strengths.

Fourth is inconsistent use of learning outcomes at the program and course level.

Specific action(s):

Continue to administer the alumni and graduate surveys and analyze the data collected for assessment and action. Utilize LinkedIn and Facebook to connect faculty and students in a professional manner and facilitate the exchange of information. Increase the number of alumni events to draw past graduates to DSC and develop critical linkages between faculty and current students with our alumni.

Increase the use of online content including GeorgiaView and publisher-provided learning management systems to deliver content to students. Increase the production of faculty-designed "practice" and "study" aids for students. Increase use of Smartboard technology, tablet-driven classroom instructional management (example: using the Surface Pro with writing features in class to work problems).

Increase fund raising activities to help with salary pressures and the need for resources to continue building the accounting program and remain competitive and accredited. Outside funds may be used to establish endowed faculty positions. They may also help with building an accounting computer lab and purchase updated technology for faculty to use in delivering instruction.

Complete a review of our accounting program goal statement, program outcomes, and program specific student learning outcomes to ensure consistency with those used in assurance of learning (Weave system). This will include updating all course level student learning outcomes.

Expected outcomes:

Increased quality of information will help our leadership team and faculty make better decisions about program changes and resource allocations.

Increased use of technology enhanced instruction will help our students perform better in accounting courses, reducing attrition from the major. Specifically we want to be able to employ smarter technology in the classroom and online.

Increased funding will help reduce the competitive pressures experienced in delivering a high quality affordable accounting program.

Complete all revisions to the program and course level assessment materials for accounting ensuring consistency and relevancy. We will draft a planning document for the accounting discipline and maintain it in a SharePoint folder accessible by WSOB leadership and accounting faculty in order to be transparent and help ensure it is maintained properly.



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Time frame for achievement:

Except for the fourth item of concern these are long term needs of the program, so the time frame for achievement is a five-year rolling window. We expect to complete the fourth item within the current calendar year 2019.

Person(s) responsible:

Primary responsibility rests with the Dean and the leadership team. Implementation of technology for instructional purposes is the responsibility of faculty and should be evidenced through annual evaluation goals.

Resources needed:

As noted throughout.



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Prepared by:

Signature

Colby Gehring

Date:

1/24/2019

Dean's Approval:

Signature:

D. Wayne M. Helms

Date:

1/24/2019

Approval of the Chair of the DSC Comprehensive Program Review Committee:

Signature:

D. Wayne M. Helms

Date:

1/24/2019

Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Categorical Summation:

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

Program **MEETS** Institution's Criteria

- Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
- Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing, or a high demand field, and thus will be enhanced.

Program **DOES NOT MEET** Institution's Criteria for continuation.

- Program will be placed on monitoring status.
- Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
- Program will be deactivated.
- Program will be voluntarily terminated.
- Other (Please elaborate):

VPAA Signature:

Pat Chute

Date:

1/31/19

Patricia M. Chute, Ed.D.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

Dalton State College