To: Linda McCown, Clinical Laboratory Science Department Chair

From: CLAS Curriculum Committee,
Missy Thibodeaux-Thompson, Chair

Re: Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS) Department Program Review

Date: March 22, 2010

The CLAS Curriculum Committee (CC) thanks you for preparing a thorough program review of the Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS) department. The CC has reviewed and discussed the program review, and our commendations and recommendations are as follows.

The CC acknowledges the high standards implemented in the CLS degree program. The program has sound educational goals, and provides a balance of rigorous academic work alongside challenging clinical experience. The sample “curriculum guide” that is provided is clear, and while the course of study leaves little room for variance for students, it appears to ensure a timely matriculation for students.

The graduation requirement of having a “C” or better in required courses supports the academic rigor of the program, as does the required 70% score on the department’s comprehensive closure exam. In addition, the 100% pass rate for students for the comprehensive closure exam points to the success of the challenging program. In a pre-professional program such as this, including a comprehensive examination is an excellent measure to ensure retention and understanding of important material.

The CC also appreciates the department’s implementation of site evaluations for clinical experiences. The department utilizes the site evaluations as a way to reflect on the clinical experiences of the students, and makes adjustments within this particular program requirement as necessary. Furthermore, the CC recognizes that faculty members are diligent in addressing assessment issues within the curriculum by modifying courses when necessary, based on various forms of feedback. The tracking of external certification exams (while not a graduation requirement) is a helpful assessment tool for the department, and the fact that CLS student scores are above the national average is quite commendable.

The CC applauds the department for the impressive statistic of 100% job placement of graduates. The department also uses graduate and employer surveys to track student satisfaction, as well as employer satisfaction with CLS graduates.

Recruitment efforts for the department are commendable, and the CC acknowledges the benefit of pairing with neighboring LLCC to help fully prepare potential students. The admissions standards for the CLS program are very demanding, which is appropriate for a degree program of this nature, and the admissions process is very thorough. The CC is
impressed with the number and nature of materials that are provided for interested and incoming students. At the same time, the CC wonders if such rigor and rigidity could be a hindrance in recruiting majors. Furthermore, the numerous requirements could make the program more challenging for some students, although the CC commends the program for upholding the high standards of the program. The CC recognizes the benefit of the potential marketing grant with LLCC, and encourages the ongoing development of marketing strategies for the program.

The CC recognizes the challenging nature of the program, and acknowledges the difficulties with admission and retention that such rigor can create. The department's approach to retention is logical given the rigor and precise nature of the field of study. CLS faculty work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to assist students who are struggling academically, and they interview students who leave the program in an attempt to garner reasons for their departure. The CC feels the department is making efforts to address this issue, while maintaining the high academic standards required for such a program. However, further curricular review and analysis of retention rates could allow the department to shed more light on this issue.

The CC is also impressed with the efforts by faculty and the department regarding advising. Faculty are diligent about providing activities to assist students with academic success, and the chair takes on the arduous task of advising first and second year students, prior to those students being fully admitted into the program. The department has good organization and record-keeping for advising, tracking students who are having difficulty.

The program review mentions investigating a possible pre-med concentration. The CC suggests a more thorough analysis regarding the benefits of concentrations in a program of study that is already so specified.

CLS faculty members' credentials, honors, and scholarship work are impressive. The CC applauds the CLS faculty for staying abreast of new developments in an ever-evolving field, in the midst of juggling a heavy teaching load, coordinating with clinical instructors and site coordinators, and maintaining strong service and scholarship/research work.

Regarding general curricular support, the CC affirms the department's request for a high resolution video camera for their existing 5-head microscope, and for more adequate and up-to-date library resources.

The CC appreciates the willingness of the CLS department to find creative solutions to space needs, as well as their creative and frugal use of resources. The department has strong productivity, and the CC applauds the number and quality of grants received for external funding.

The CC applauds CLS for their NAACLS 7-year accreditation with no citations, and recognizes the importance of the CLS program to the medical field in central Illinois and the state. The CC also acknowledges that CLS' goals are consistent with UIS' mission in
providing “its students with the knowledge, skills, and experience that lead to productive careers in the private and public sectors” (UIS Mission Statement), and the broad goal of becoming one of the top 5 small public liberal arts universities in the country. CLS is making strong efforts in serving the UIS mission.

c. Jim Ermatinger
   Terry Bodenhorn
   Karen Moranski
   Harshavardhan Bapat