

## Program Improvement Plan – Pharmacy Technician

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As a nationwide shortage of pharmacists continues to pose a challenge in the field of pharmacy and the role of the pharmacist expands to provide not only patient care and education but also advice to prescribers, the demand for formally education pharmacy technicians has increased significantly. The well-educated technician is accountable for the daily tasks within the pharmacy, which allows the pharmacist to concentrate on patient care and advice. The objective of the Pharmacy Technician program is to train and develop qualified pharmacy technicians who value the fundamentals of pharmacy standards and competently assist the pharmacist in direct patient care. Graduates of this program are prepared to seek entry-level employment in a variety of pharmacy settings. A diploma as a pharmacy technician gives students a solid foundation of pharmacy fundamentals and terminology. Students of this program will get hands-on practice in multiple pharmacy areas such as hospital, retail, compounding, mail-order, and long-term care. Topics such as professionalism, state and federal law, and ethical issues will also be covered. Upon completion of the diploma program, graduates may seek employment in a retail, hospital, compounding, mail-order, or long-term care pharmacies. In most states, pharmacy technicians must be registered or licensed with the state board of pharmacy. Certification is available through the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) or the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ICPT). To be eligible for state registration/licensure and national certification, students must not have had any drug-related or pharmacy-related convictions, including misdemeanors. The pharmacy technician diploma program consists of ten courses. The courses total 910 hours, which are comprised of a total of 454 lecture hours, 186 laboratory hours, and 270 externship hours. Prior to completion, the student is required to register as a “Tech in Training” with the PTCB. This registration will allow the student to gain employment for one year. At the end of the year, the student must sit for their certification through PTCB.

This plan will address the low licensure pass rate for the Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (PTCE) taken by students in this program. This plan will provide relevant data on the program, analyze the current status of the program, and provide an action plan for improvement.

### **Graduate Satisfaction**

A student’s satisfaction and sense of accomplishment upon earning their diploma is the product of all of the program’s efforts. Graduates complete the Graduate Satisfaction Survey after finishing their program of study. These surveys are used as a means of identifying the graduate’s satisfaction. The content of the survey covers whether the student is satisfied with their education, as well as their satisfaction level with various departments in the school.

- I was satisfied with the quality of education from this college.
- I would recommend this college to my friends and family.
- The college has helped me to prepare for my future career.
- The college has met my expectations.

The second portion of the survey rates the front/reception area, admissions, financial aid, business office, educational administration, faculty/teachers, career services, library, facilities/classrooms, and equipment.

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The program had five graduates participate in the survey during the first quarter. Overall, the program's graduates are satisfied with their program. The majority of graduates found their educational experience to be excellent. In addition, most graduates rated the school departments overall as either excellent or very good. The PT students who completed the survey did not provide any specific comments about their educational experience. Essentially, these graduates feel that the program fulfilled its objective to prepare them to obtain an entry-level position in their field of study.

### **Employer Satisfaction**

Employer satisfaction is a key component in measuring placement percentages. An Employer Survey is sent to all employers after a graduate has been on site for a period of a few weeks. The purpose of this survey is to discover how the facility feels the graduate has been prepared for the workforce. The goal for effectively training and positively empowering students toward successful career placement is one of the foundational benchmarks targeted by Anthem College. Each month an employer who has employed a graduate during that month will receive a follow-up phone call to ensure the graduate's skill and knowledge level is appropriate for the workplace.

The employer rates the graduate in the following areas:

- Level of skill demonstrated in areas related to academic preparation
- Ability to address customer/patient needs appropriately
- Confidence in job-related skills
- Overall initiative
- Preparation for an entry-level position in the field

Employer satisfaction is important in order to offer our students opportunities within the community on a continuous basis. Ongoing surveys and evaluation of employer can address issues.

For the first quarter, six employers participated in the survey. Overall, the program's employers are satisfied with their graduates. The majority of employers found that their graduates had suitable skill levels; however, there were more responses of "fair" students. The majority of the comments regarding PT graduates were favorable, including positive feedback from clients. However, employers did comment that one graduate needed confidence building and one graduate did not take instruction well.

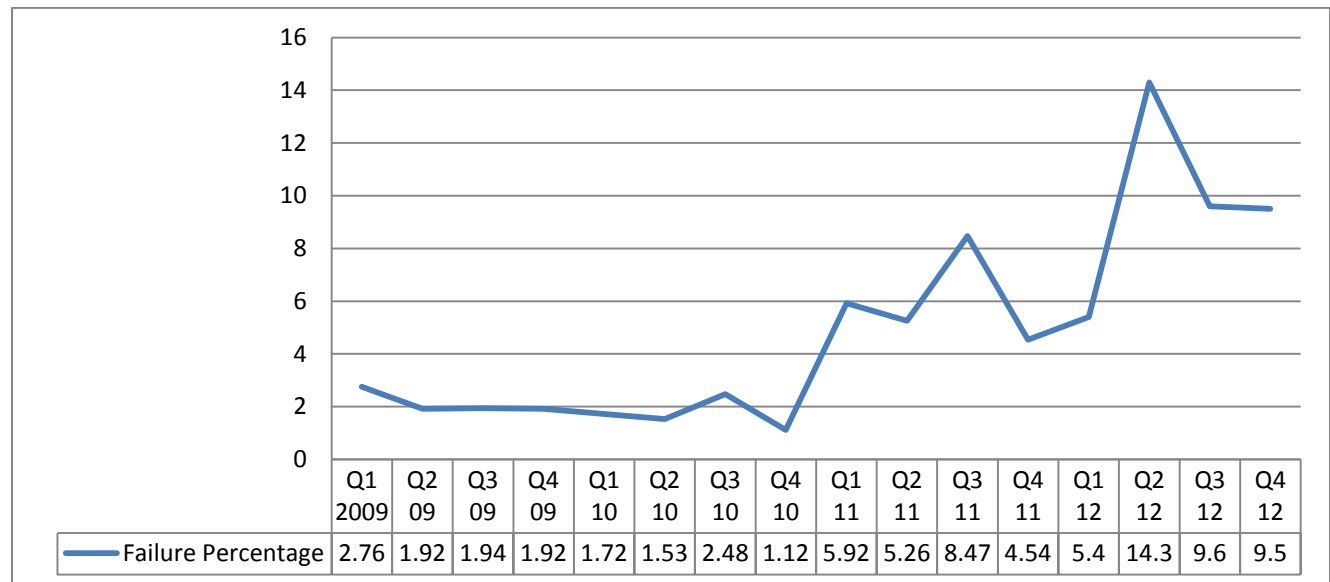
### **Student Learning Outcomes**

#### *Student Failure Rates*

One indication of the success of the curriculum in a program is the percentage of students who successfully complete the course, as evidenced by a passing grade. Through reviewing failure percentages as a campus, the school can determine which programs students have the most difficulty with, and implement appropriate strategies to increase student learning outcomes. If

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students continue to struggle in their coursework, they are less likely to be successful when attempting licensure exam.



During FY 2012, the program saw an increase in failure rate percentages. However, at the end of the fiscal year, this number continued to decrease. During the first quarter of FY 2013, student failures for PT were not higher than other programs in terms of the number of students. During this time, the program has experienced a complete turnover in instructional staff. The program hopes that these new staff will provide new experiences and expertise to continue the positive trend of reducing the student failure rate for the next fiscal year.

### *Program Assessment/Comprehensive Exams*

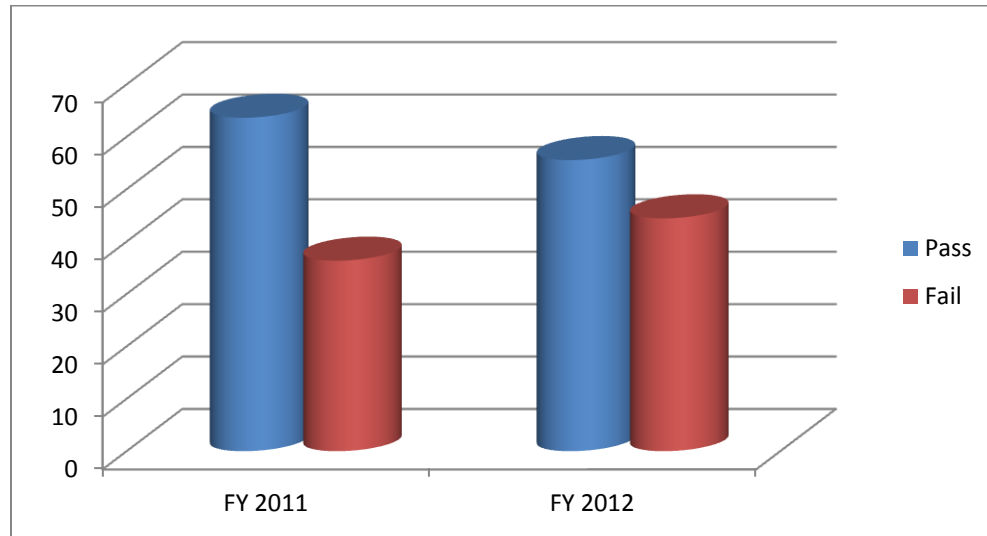
To ensure that pharmacy technician students are progressing through the program, students must successfully show proficiency in hands-on skills prior to beginning externship. During each course, students are expected to complete the skills necessary to be functional in the pharmacy. The school monitors this progress by utilizing a check-off record that is only considered complete when a student has demonstrated the hands-on skills that would be found in a “real-world” setting. Students are also evaluated on their skills during externship. A keyboarding benchmark is determined for each student utilizing a keyboarding program to record words per minute and errors. This tool is used to determine the student’s progression through the program. Brand/generic drug outcomes are determined by requiring students to research and present on drugs specific to each course via a drug workbook, and they are tested over these drugs regularly. Upon completion of all didactic courses, students complete a comprehensive final exam over the top 200 drugs before beginning their externship. Students are required to show competencies utilizing various benchmarks prior to beginning externship.

### *Credentialing Examination Rates*

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The pass rate of the PTCE examination offers the Program an opportunity to analyze its effectiveness as validated by an outside source. The results of the exam are provided to the Program Head. We provide the students with study materials and resources in the library for success in passing this exam.



Last year's overall pass rate for first-time takers of the PTCE was 55.56%, which is below accreditation standards. Upon analyzing the pass rates for the last year, the program began to develop new actions to improve results. These actions will help to increase the pass rate of the PTCE in the next year.

### **Program Analysis**

The certification pass rate declined between FY 2011 and FY 2012. Due to high turnover in the program, it is difficult to analyze the reasons why the certification pass rate was below the benchmark. Based on analysis of current students in the program, it seems most likely that the students who were not successful in their certification struggled with either the math calculations of the program or with the brand and generic drug names. Both items are addressed in the current curriculum and will continue to be a focus for the program in the next fiscal year to improve student learning outcomes. A new Program Head has been named for this program and will be responsible for tracking PTCE pass rates and analyzing available trends in student success.

### **Planned Activities**

In order to address the current licensure examination pass rate, the program will implement the following initiatives:

- Continue to provide excellent curriculum and education by well-trained instructors to prepare our students for the certification exam. The program has experienced complete

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turnover in instructional staff. The program will continue to utilize feedback from the industry to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the industry and that students are adequately prepared for their licensure examination.

- Utilize Fridays as time allows to prepare students for the PTCE. The Program Head will provide certification review materials to the students to encourage critical thinking and study strategies for this exam. Instructors will offer tutoring and additional hands-on training to students who struggle in particular areas.
- Encourage students to create peer study groups for the examination. This will encourage collaboration and additional instruction to supplement classroom work and facilitate student success on the exam.
- Stress the importance of certification from the beginning of the program to encourage students to prepare for and pass the PTCE. Instructors will explain the importance of licensure in the profession and for placement opportunities.
- Utilize a variety of teaching techniques to provide new instructional methods for PTCE material that supplement the lecture and hands-on instruction provided in day-to-day coursework.
- Pair successful students and/or graduates with current students and/or graduates who are struggling with content areas to serve as mentors. Matching up students with other students provides a new perspective and experience in preparing for coursework and/or the exam, and may provide additional motivation from a source outside of the instructor.