

Program Improvement Plan – Surgical Technologist Diploma

Technological developments have enhanced the sophistication of surgery and the role of the surgical technologist. The ongoing changes not only have made it a necessity for surgical technologists to have appropriate education and certification for employment, but also contributed to a growing need for educational programs that prepare individuals with entry-level skills in the surgical technology profession. The surgical technologist serves as a vital member of the healthcare team, and the Surgical Technology program provides students with the required knowledge base and technical skills to function competently in the operating room. The curriculum provides a study in aseptic techniques, anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, general and specialty surgical procedures and techniques. Through the program courses, the student learns in simulated situations to be an integral member of the surgical team, working closely with the surgeon anesthesiologist, and registered nurse to deliver direct patient care before, during, and after surgery. The surgical technologist diploma program consists of 14 courses. The courses total 1235 hours, which are comprised of a total of 640 lecture hours, 280 laboratory hours, and 315 externship hours.

This plan will address the low placement rate for the 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.

Only one student completed the survey for the first quarter. Overall, the College'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.

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

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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.

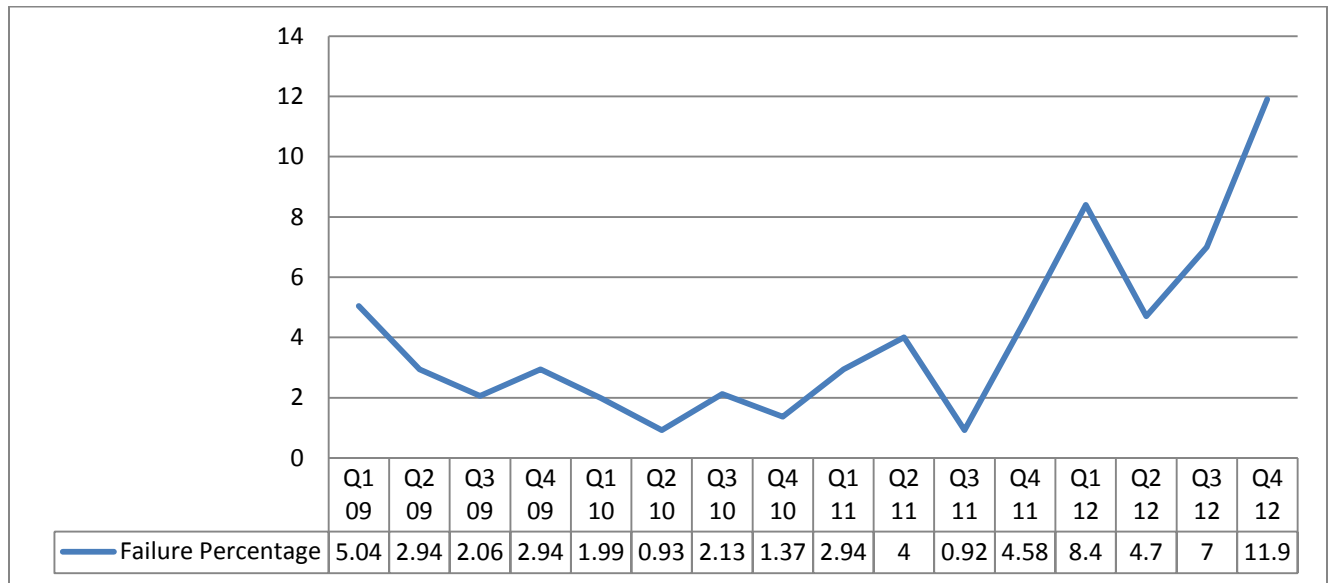
The program had one employer participate during the first quarter. Overall, the school's employers are satisfied with their graduates. The majority of employers found that their graduates had suitable skill levels; however, there were more responses of "fair" students.

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 students continue to struggle in their coursework, they are less likely to be successful when attempting licensure exam. Further, they are less likely to develop the appropriate skills and knowledge necessary for success in the field. Thus, it is imperative that students demonstrate strong academic outcomes to encourage strong placement outcomes.

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During FY 2012, the program saw an increase in failure rate percentages. The program continues to seek strategies to address high failure rates and reduce the number of students who must repeat coursework. During the first course end during FY 2013, 4 ST students failed a course; however, in the months since, ST failures are no higher than other programs.

Program Assessment/Comprehensive Exams

Surgical technology students are evaluated monthly using the assigned monthly student skill evaluation. There is linear progression from basic hand washing skills to different levels of surgical cases. Although, it is a wheel system, at every lab module, students all start basic aseptic technique and progress from there. No student begins an invasive case without first mastering basic aseptic technique. Those cases will consist of a breast biopsy, inguinal hernias, appendectomies, exploratory laparotomies, and continued progress into more invasive procedures. Within the first concentration course, the students must accomplish basic aseptic technique skills that prepare the operating room for surgery. These basic skills consist of wiping down a room, opening sterile items on a back table, draping a mayo stand, aseptic scrub, gowning, and gloving, along with gowning and gloving other surgical team members. In addition, as they progress through the program, students are required to complete a procedure case analysis before they are allowed to first scrub various cases. Each procedure cases analysis encompasses more skills that will be needed as an entry-level surgical technologist.

Based on the results above, the students continue to have a mastery of their field of study. These results also show that the instructors are effective in the classroom. In order to continue the positive trend, the Program Head and Instructor will continue to follow its current processes to prepare the students.

Extern/Preceptor Evaluations

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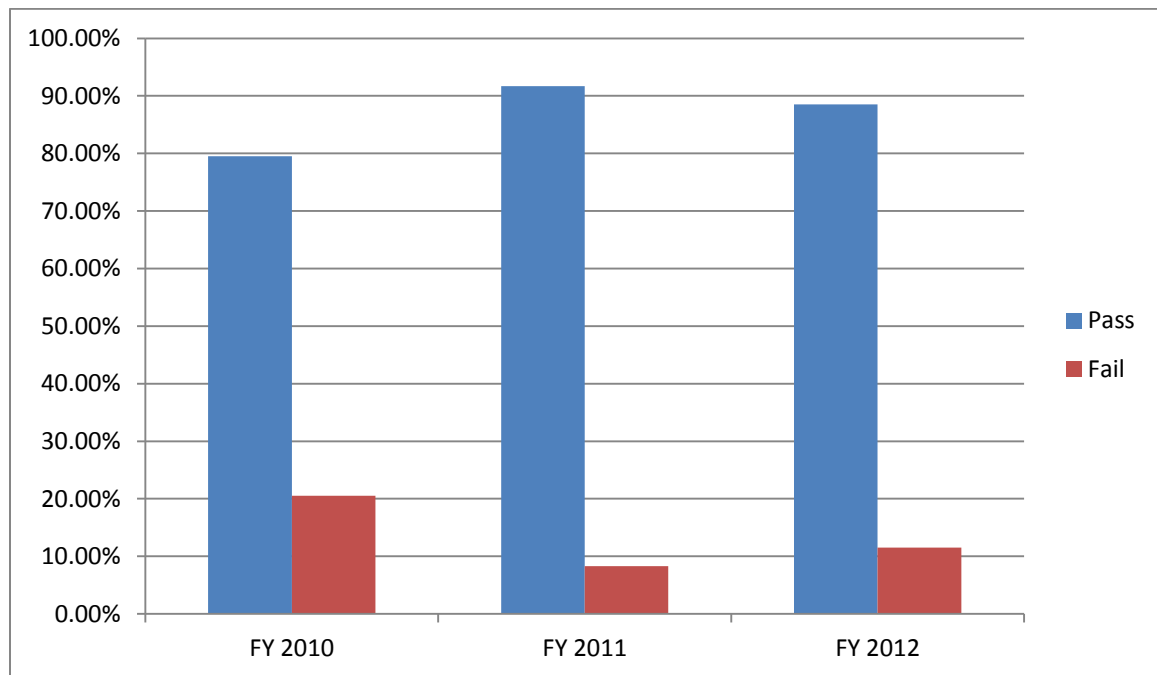
Currently, preceptor evaluations are conducted twice during a student's externship period. During this time, the Program Head or Clinical Coordinator visits the site and conducts a review of the student's performance. The evaluations are utilized not only to determine the student's progress, but, when analyzed as a whole, the areas of strength and weakness in the program itself.

Upon analyzing the data from the extern evaluations, it was found the feedback was not properly being discussed or utilized on a consistent basis to improve the program. Moving forward, the program will adopt new curriculum with more detailed surveys for the preceptor. The instructors, Clinical Coordinator, and/or Program Head will educate students on their evaluation periods and what they will be evaluated on during their externship.

Credentialing Examination Rates

The pass rate of the NCCT Tech in Surgery 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 directly from the National Center for Competency Testing. The Program Head monitors and presents results to the faculty. Feedback is gathered from these meetings and action plans are developed as necessary.

FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
79.5%	91.7%	88.5%



Based on the strong pass rate, it is evident that students perform well with this exam. We will continue to strive for higher numbers with this pass rate. The program will utilize such techniques as utilizing Fridays for exam preparation time, considering the use of a

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comprehensive final, and encouraging the use of peer study groups to maintain certification pass rates at high levels.

Program Analysis

The placement rate for the surgical technologist diploma program was under the benchmark of 58%, reporting a placement rate percentage of 54.3%. One consideration to the low placement rate has been challenges with the surgical technologist program that have been seen by campuses across the country. To address challenges with the program, the program is currently under analysis for curriculum and other considerations to ensure that students receive the best education possible. Through a strong educational foundation, students are more prepared for their externship and eventual employment in the field. In addition, the program has a low externship to hire percentage, which increases the challenges of finding appropriate placement sites for students. The school must address the availability of extern sites in a position to hire students. Supplementing extern to hire ratios will in turn provide greater assistance in raising the placement rate.

Planned Activities

The institution acknowledges weak placement outcomes in this program. The program will implement the following initiatives to address this area:

- Faculty will demonstrate the importance of soft skills and expectations in the field by being a direct representation through their actions in the classroom setting. Students who exhibit the professionalism and soft skills expected in the profession will be more likely to succeed on externship and be more successful in obtaining employment in the field. Instructors will utilize their own experiences to model and instill these behaviors in their students.
- The Program Head and/or Career Center will personally touch base with each unemployed graduate to follow up on the progress of their job search, offering assistance when needed. Contact methods may include telephone calls, emails with information and/or job leads, and certified letters.
- Develop relationships with more externships sites, preferably those that are in the process of hiring. This will increase the potential for successful externship to hire conversion rates. The program has identified a new Clinical Coordinator to assist in developing these relationships, placing students on site, and evaluating students while on externship to ensure success throughout the program.
- Beginning October 22, 2012, the Career Center will launch a series of six mini workshops specifically designed to both motivate and teach students about key areas that will be critical to their success as a student, candidate, and future employee. There will be one workshop every month for each program using a matrix system.
- The Career Center team will work with employers and graduates to make better and more consistent use of the graduate warranty certificate program. By providing graduates with additional training if needed, both the graduate and employer are satisfied with the employment relationship. This encourages the success of the graduate in the field and also supplements employer relationships for future job orders.

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- Ensure that students are aware of the services offered by the department and make use of those services. During the first quarter, the Career Center offered Pizza and Placement events to encourage both current students and graduates to make use of the department's services and to be aware of the resources and tools available to students and graduates. The workshops focused on job searching and resumes.