Montana University System

PROGRAM REVIEW

Institution: **Helena College**

Program Years: **2020-21 to 2024-25**

List of the programs reviewed:

Fire & Emergency Services (AS and CAS)

Decision(s) concerning the future of the program(s), based on the program review criteria established at the campus:

Continue

Rationale or justification for the decision based on the program review process established at the campus. Include graduation numbers and student majors for each of the last seven (7) years for every program under review.

Credentials: A.S. Fire & Emergency Services, C.A.S. Fire & Emergency Services

The Fire & Emergency Services program at Helena College prepares students for employment or transfer within the field of public safety. The program's hands-on curriculum emphasizes preparation to earn industry-recognized certifications and build a foundation for transfer to a four-year program in a related field. In this way, students are able to obtain immediate employment in a high-demand career (15% projected growth in Montana from 2022 to 2032), or continue their education in the field. This structure also enables students working in two rural volunteer fire departments to work on their education while gaining valuable work experience and earning credit by exam.

Enrollment has remained steady since the curriculum was redesigned (converting a A.A.S into a more transferrable A.S.) in 2020. Degrees and certificates, as well as the 150% graduation rate, has been more variable. Demand for entry-level firefighters and related occupations is high across the state, leading to fire departments removing the requirement for applicants to hold a degree and/or have prior training. Additionally, students seem to struggle more in their general education courses than in their discipline-specific courses, possibly due to lack of interest or challenges associated with attending courses online or at the main campus. These are two possible reasons the completion rate is relatively low for a technical program at Helena College, and two things the program hopes to address in the next few years.

The Fire & Emergency Services instructor plans to engage with industry partners to understand projected needs and hiring practices in area fire departments. Faculty will also collect information from recent graduates and current students about their career goals and perceived value of the offerings at Helena College. Program faculty will explore new pathways, changes to the curriculum, and partnerships with other colleges in the state to identify the most promising options for students in Helena to pursue a career in this necessary and rewarding field. College leadership is supportive of this program, which has a very good reputation across the state, and will work to support necessary changes to ensure continued success of the program and the students who participate.

Student Participation & Success	AY 2021	AY 2122	AY 2223	AY 2324	AY 2425	5-Year Average
Unduplicated annual enrollment (headcount)	12	16	14	14	14	14
Average annual FTE	16	9	16	16	16	15
Retention rate (fall to fall)	0%	75%	78%	45%	67%	53%
Degrees/certificates awarded	8	0	9	17	4	8
150% graduation rate	24%	47%	0%	50%	78%	40%