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June 9, 2026

Emergency Medical Services Department
Central Oregon Community College

Dear Michael, Rodney, and Kim:

Thank you for taking part in Department & Program Review (DPR) this year. The DPR process reveals critical connections that link your strengths, needs, values, priorities, and plans to those of the College. Further, it supports our commitment to innovation through continual improvement. We commend your dedication to empowering our students, engaging our communities, and supporting our values.

Successes

We would like to begin by recognizing and celebrating the numerous achievements of the EMS program. Among these achievements are the enhancement of the program with high-quality, hands-on learning opportunities for students, ranging from the acquisition of the Lucas chest compression device and high- and medium-fidelity mannequins, to providing cadaver experience and the repurposing of Juniper Hall to create immersive training areas. Second, we commend faculty participation in EMS education initiatives statewide and interdisciplinary efforts at COCC with programs such as Fire Science and Forestry. The community partnerships, accreditation success, and the successful development, approval and implementation of a competency-based EMT curriculum based on the 2025 Oregon Health Authority mandate are noteworthy as well. We applaud the increasing success rates of students on exams as well as healthy employment placement. Finally, we recognize the EMS advisory board, whose active role has enabled the program to be responsive to community and regional needs. We also commend the inclusion of former and current students on the advisory board.

Challenges

We acknowledge that these past few years have been challenging for EMS, considering that a new EMS program director started just before the accreditation site visit; the development of significant EMS faculty/staff interpersonal conflicts; and constraints on students' clinical rotation placements, especially with St. Charles Health System (SCHS). You mentioned the need for a simulation specialist to remedy the fewer clinical hours available at St. Charles. Nursing faces the same challenges, so we appreciate your brainstorming of how EMS and Nursing might share a simulation coordinator. Lastly, it will be a challenge replacing Rod when he retires as the primary Paramedic Instructor next June 2027. We encourage you to get that position approved and posted early so that we can get many high-quality applicants to apply.

Goals and needs

Over the next five years, succession planning will be a critical priority as faculty approach retirement. As is the case with many CTE programs, potential candidates for teaching can earn more in the field, so recruitment is challenging. The program has been proactive, however, by observing and cultivating potential future faculty through part-time roles and lab assistant positions, creating a pipeline of candidates who are already familiar with the program's culture and standards. We encourage you to continue this strategy, and to work with your dean to identify other resources for finding talented professionals who may want to move out of active professional work and into teaching.

Capital improvements represent another significant goal, with the program making some recent progress: new laryngoscopes and stretchers were successfully acquired this year. However, the ambulance situation remains a pressing concern: the program currently has two non-operational units and is borrowing from Alfalfa, making the acquisition of a functional replacement vehicle an urgent need going forward. On the simulation and technology front, the high-fidelity mannequins currently shared with SCHS present scheduling and access challenges, and you express a need to expand simulation capabilities including immersion rooms with projected simulation environments and VR goggles to better serve students. These advances in teaching and learning materials will give our students the best possible preparation and we encourage you to work with the grants office and your dean to identify funding sources or donations that may not be available within the College's budget.

Expansion to Madras has also been identified as a five-year goal, and we highly encourage this. Your dean has identified the nursing assistant program's open classroom spaces as a viable home for an EMT course. Equipment would need to be purchased or borrowed from Bend to make this work, and a realistic launch timeline points to the 2027–28 academic year. You envisioned a ten-week A and B course structure, with the EMT program occupying the space during the terms opposite those used by the nursing assistant program, making efficient use of existing facilities without conflict. We appreciate your creative thinking about ways to expand emergency medical service training to rural parts of Central Oregon.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student readiness. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out. We look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality and impact of the Emergency Medical Services program.

Sincerely yours,



Annemarie E. Hamlin
Vice President of Academic Affairs



Julie Downing
Instructional Dean



Gabrielle Orsi
Assessment and Curriculum
Administrator