I. **Degree:** B.S. Vocational Rehabilitation

**Program Director:** Dr. Susie Eberhard

**PRC Consultant(s):** Julia Derks and Brian Finder

**Purpose of the Review:** The review was conducted to assess the quality of the B.S. in Vocational Rehabilitation degree program as part of the ongoing seven-year review cycle of every UW-Stout program.

**Committee Findings:** The PRC recommends that this program continue to be one of UW-Stout's degree programs for the ongoing seven-year cycle, and that recommendations made by the committee be implemented.

II. **Abstract:**

The B.S. Vocational Rehabilitation program at UW-Stout is one of 38 programs worldwide that prepares students for a variety of professional careers serving persons with disabilities and other barriers to success. There is a growing need for rehabilitation professionals in this society as the population ages and as advances in medicine and technology allow persons with more severe disabilities to live longer, fuller lives. Many vocational rehabilitation graduates work as residential counselors, special education teachers, correctional officers, home-care coordinators, employment specialists, or in other human services rehabilitation areas, all of which are identified by the most recent Wisconsin Department of Labor projections and Bureau of Labor Statistics as among the fastest growing occupations in Wisconsin and the United States. The program offers broad preparation to its 256 current students in rehabilitation service provision with a unique array of specialty options including 10 different concentrations. The course delivery format includes evening and weekend offerings to accommodate the adult, commuting, and part-time student.

The PRC consultants found that attempts have been made to address major concerns raised in the 1997-98 program review and in light of many changes that the program has experienced since the last review cycle, it appears that some course overlap remains a concern.

III. **Process Followed for Current Review:**

The PRC Chair met with the dean, program director and chair of the primary department to discuss the review process. The PRC consultants also met with the program director to review the procedures and offer assistance. Under guidelines developed by the PRC, information regarding the program was gathered from the Placement Office, Institutional Research, the program director, key instructors, program committee, students, and one-year and three-year graduates. There were 64 students, mostly juniors and seniors, who participated in the class-administered survey. In addition, 13 key instructors and 4 program committee members responded, while 10 of 26 graduates surveyed in 2002 and 14 of 27 graduates surveyed in 2000 responded (38% and 52% of those polled). Observations were made by the consultants based on these surveys and institutional data and were reported to and discussed by the PRC. The program director presented a summary of her report to the committee and had an opportunity to address
concerns. The Dean from the College of Human Development was also available to answer questions. The consultants then wrote the recommendation report. This report was forwarded to the deans for their response. The PRC reviewed the responses from the deans, approved the recommendation report, and forwarded the report to the Faculty Senate.

IV. Previous Review:

Previous Recommendations

The previous PRC review of the B.S. Vocational Rehabilitation program was conducted during 1997-98. That report was written by Pinckney Hall and Richard Lowery and their recommendations as well as the program director’s responses are summarized below:

1.a Consultants’ recommendation - The program director, working with other departmental members, should continue to review the curriculum to ensure that there is no unnecessary course material overlap.

1.b. Program director’s response – The issue of curriculum overlap is something that the Department of Rehabilitation is already addressing. Many of the students’ comments were specific to two courses. The faculty are also addressing the follow-up survey conducted by the department chair and program director to identify specific competencies which students perceive as being covered in multiple courses.

2.a. Consultants’ recommendation - The program director, in cooperation with the college dean and the department chair, need to develop and implement a solid marketing plan designed to increase both freshman and transfer enrollment

2.b. Program director’s response – The program director strongly agrees with the recommendation to develop a solid marketing plan. The plan will be completed by the end of the year. Recent efforts have included: developing another articulation agreement with a two-year AA program in developmental disabilities; conducting workshops at a high school career day; scheduling recruitment activities at the state vocational rehabilitation conference, and training three vocational rehabilitation students as ambassadors.

V. Program Review:

Program Strengths

| 1. The program is dynamic in its efforts to prepare professionals for the demands of the field. | Student surveys, self-report, employer surveys, advisory committee surveys |
| 2. The program is efficient in that it accesses courses across campus and effectively uses support services to promote student competence. | Self-report, key instructor surveys, advisory committee surveys, and Appendix D |
| 3. By having 10 separate competency-based concentrations, students who cannot progress toward a teaching licensure can shift their rehabilitation without the teaching emphasis. | Self-report |
4. The program’s advisory committee members are actively engaged, represent faculty, past graduates, and professionals from the field, and believe their input is valued. Self-report and advisory committee survey

5. Input gathered from existing students, past graduates, and the advisory committee has helped create three new concentrations as well as make changes in various experiential courses. Self-report and Appendix D

6. The expertise, professionalism, and passion of the faculty/instructors are viewed as strong. Self-report, student surveys, and advisory committee surveys

7. The quality of the program as well as its ability to meet the established course objectives was rated highly and most students would choose the program if they were to do it all over again. Student surveys

8. The hands-on nature of students’ coursework is perceived as a strong program asset. Self-report, student surveys, and key instructor surveys

9. Graduates indicated that they had developed competence in all areas surveyed and nearly all competencies listed on the one-year graduate follow-up surveys improved from 2000 to 2002. One year graduate follow-up surveys

10. Employers’ perspectives of graduates’ competencies as well as preparation in comparison to others is favorable. Employer survey

11. Students are able to shadow professionals in the field as well as hone their leadership skills in vocational rehabilitation-based student organizations. Self-report and student surveys

12. Course delivery formats include evening and weekend offerings to accommodate adult, commuting, and part-time students. Self-report, website, and course offerings

13. Articulation agreements are utilized to enhance students’ access to higher education and to promote development of service providers in the field. Self-report and website

Issues of Concern

1. The ability to maintain up-to-date and functional laboratory equipment/tools, the program webpage, as well as to ensure sufficient open lab times continue as a priority. Self-report, student and key instructor surveys
2. Concern exists with regard to the extent of course overlap with courses like Psychometric Testing and Evaluation, as well as Caseload Management and Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation.

3. Feelings expressed primarily by the special education concentration students indicate that some faculty/staff do not possess the appropriate technical/teaching skills, and also that students were uninformed about e-portfolio requirements.

4. Development of new concentrations coupled with the influx of new faculty has required additional attention to the adequacy and consistency of program courses, as well as of student advisement.

5. Integration of new concentrations (i.e. Criminal Justice) continues to be of concern.

6. Various competencies relating to conducting research, use of math or statistics, and appreciating the need for racial equity received somewhat lower, although still positive ratings.

7. By not being registered with the Undergraduate Rehabilitation Registry, the program is unable to demonstrate compliance with prevailing professional standards, which may negatively impact future student recruitment efforts.

**Recommendations for the Program Director**

1. Continue the current efforts to eliminate unnecessary course overlap and to help students understand the reasons for necessary course overlap, especially with courses like Psychometric Testing and Evaluation, as well as Caseload Management and Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation.

2. Assist the special education concentration students and faculty in making the transition to the new DPI standards.

3. Continue to support new faculty to understand the program and advisement process.

4. Since it is unlikely that any additional new courses will be added to the Criminal Justice concentration, it is recommended that continued emphasis be placed on advising students about the rehabilitation rather than enforcement emphasis in this concentration.

5. Identify and modify areas in the curriculum where racial equity can be emphasized.
Recommendation for the Chair of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department

1. Assist the program director as needed to provide resources that will permit the program to be registered with the Undergraduate Rehabilitation Registry.

Recommendation for the Dean, College of Human Development

1. Identify and secure funding-based opportunities that can assist the B.S. Vocational Rehabilitation program with the updating of its lab-based facilities as well as staffing of such areas. Also support the updating and presentation of materials on the program webpage.

Recommendation for the Dean, School of Education

1. Work with the program director of the B.S. in Vocational Rehabilitation program to assist the special education students and faculty in making the transition to the new DPI standards.