

6. External Factors *(see Handbook for additional information)*

A. Opportunities: *Current trends and events occurring **outside** the department that, if taken advantage of, are likely to have a positive effect on its long-term success. Examples may include: realistic training opportunities; industry trends; revenue-generation opportunities; development of new tools or technology to help manage workload.*

There are several areas of opportunities for us to explore during this review cycle including: fully utilizing publisher-based online learning platforms to engage students with course materials, identifying appropriate objective measures to gauge program success, and participating in professional organizations' conferences to maintain currency in our curriculum.

Allied health fields continue to have high demand forecasts from the Bureau of Labor: Employment of registered nurses (whom we help prepare with basic nursing requirement courses) is projected to grow 19% from 2012 to 2022 (www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm) due to increased emphasis on preventative care, higher rates of chronic conditions, and the needs of the baby boomer generation. This suggests that we should continue to expand our basic nursing requirement courses as necessary. With environmental science and protection occupations also expected to grow 19% over 2012-2022, adding thousands of new jobs to the economy, we might also consider expanding our environmental science course offerings by adding a field ecology course, geographic information systems (GIS) or biostatistics course to complement our environmental biology course.

B. Threats: *Current trends and events occurring **outside** the department or program that could jeopardize its success represent potential threats. Examples may include: state, regional, or institutional economic/budget climate; loss of support services; seasonal fluctuations in workload.*

The overall weak state of the economy, though improving, may be a threat to our growth if it prevents us from hiring additional faculty or participating in professional development programs.