

ACCREDITATION REPORT

Site Visit Team Report

For

St. Elizabeth University

Of

Health and Social Work

October 7 – 12, 2022

Evaluation Committee Members

Daniel J. West, Jr., Ph.D., FACHE, FACMPE – Chair
Steve Szydowski, MHA, MBA, DHA – Team Member
Peri Haj Ali, MD, Ph.D. – Team Member
Andrea Bevelaqua, MSc, PhD – Team Member

Final Accreditation Report Issued
February 4, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
- II. Evaluation Committee
- III. Progress Report
- IV. Site Visit
- V. Findings & Observations
- VI. Recommendations
- VII. Accreditation Decisions
 - A. Final Recommendation
 - B. Length of Accreditation
 - C. Progress Reports
 - D. Next Site Visit

I. INTRODUCTION

On June 25, 2022, Dr. Vladimir Krcmery, Rector Emeritus of St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work (SEU) in Bratislava, Slovak Republic suggested conducting another international accreditation site visit. The last accreditation site visit was conducted May 15 – 18, 2017. The final report from that site visit (September 6, 2017) recommended a site visit in Spring, 2021. Given the COVID-19 pandemic in academic year 2021 – 2022, the accreditation site visit was scheduled for Fall, 2022. Dr. West was asked to chair the international site visit and work with other accreditation team members who had familiarity with accreditation criteria and standards, a knowledge of degree programs of study, familiarity with CEE countries, and were able to meet EU & SK accreditation criteria & standards. Dr. West selected members of the site visit team, based on discussion of candidates with Dr. Krcmery, and finalized the team on September 1, 2022. The new EU guidelines were adhered to as part of the process. St. Elizabeth University was founded as a private university in 2002. In preparation for the site visit, St. Elizabeth University prepared self-study documentation and provided a progress report on all recommendations from the 4th accreditation site visit report dated September 6, 2017. On September 23, 2022 all team members were given access to English translated data on the website of the University. An agenda and schedule were developed by Dr. Krcmery and Dr. West prior to the site visit. The agenda was slightly modified prior to the actual start of the site visit. It was determined prior to the beginning of the site visit that the accreditation team would visit educational locations in Bratislava, Nove Zamky, Skalica, Zilina, Michalovce, and Presov. Members of the site visit team visited social projects in Bratislava and surrounding area. Additional documentation and materials were made available during the site visits at academic locations. Special meetings were arranged with all program directors, senior administration, students, and program faculty. The team used a blended-hybrid model for the accreditation visit using standards and criteria from the National Accreditation Council of the Slovak Republic, EU, and other international criteria & standards. The team in advance of the site visit agreed that the major areas for review would include:

1. Mission, Goals, and Objectives
2. Governance and Administration
3. Institutional Support & Finance
4. Students, Graduates, & Alumni
5. Faculty Research and Scholarship
6. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Objectives
7. Community and Professional Services
8. International Projects and External Affiliations
9. Resources and Academic Relationships
10. Facilities and Technology
11. Educational Effectiveness Assessment
12. Ethics and Integrity
13. Program Directors & Leadership
14. Community Projects
15. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

This report is based on a review of the self-documentation; progress reports on the accreditation commission recommendations from the accreditation visit in 2017; interviews with faculty, alumni, and students; interviews with the Rector, Dean, Vice-Dean; meetings with administration and members of the Board of Directors; direct observations and impressions by the site visit team members with various stakeholders; and visits to specific locations and tour of facilities; and discussions with community members. All programs of study were thoroughly examined.

II. INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Rector of St. Elizabeth University, Dr. Juraj Benca and his colleagues voluntarily invited an international team of four professionals to conduct an accreditation visit on October 7 – 12, 2022. The intent was to review the progress report based on the accreditation site visit conducted in May 2017. A peer review model was used with an emphasis on collaboration and consultation. The international evaluation committee consisted of the following:

- Daniel J. West, Jr., Ph.D., FACHE, FACMPE [Chairman]
Professor and Chair Emeritus
Department of Health Administration and Human Resources
219A McGurrin Hall
Scranton, Pennsylvania/USA 18510
Tel: +570-941-4126
FAX: +570-941-5882
Email: daniel.west@scranton.edu
- Steven Szydlowski, MHA, MBA, DHA [Team Member]
Professor & Chair
Department of Health Administration and Human Resources
225 McGurrin Hall
Scranton, Pennsylvania/USA 18510
Tel: +570-941-4367
FAX: +570-941-5882
Email: steve.szydlowski@scranton.edu
- Peri Haj Ali, M.D., PhD [Team Member & Alumnus]
Syria
Karadzicova 6
82108, Bratislava
Slovak Republic
Email: peri.haj.ali@hotmail.com

Andrea Bevelaqua, BSc, MSc
Weststrasse 18d
8280 Kreuzlingen
Schweiz/Europe
Email: bevelaqua.andrea@gmail.com

[Team Member & Prior Student]

III. PROGRESS REPORT

The team reviewed the progress report prepared by Dr. Vladimir Krcmery from the last accreditation site visit dated September 6, 2017. The 2017 report listed 32 recommendations for consideration & action. The results & progress since the last visit were as follows:

Not Met	4	12%
Partially Met	7	22%
Met	<u>21</u>	<u>66%</u>
	32	100%

All “Not Met” & “Partially Met” were still being pursued by the University. Some of the recommendations could not be realized due to Slovak law & policies of the Ministry of Health. Another intervening factor was the COVID-19 pandemic. Rescheduling of the current accreditation site visit was based on the 2017 report. Dr. West reviewed an interim progress report since the 2017 site visit report was saved and has been in continuous contact with Dr. Vladimir Krcmery regarding implementation of changes.

IV. SITE VISIT

The accreditation site visit at St. Elizabeth University was conducted October 7 – 12, 2022. Appropriate information was distributed prior to the site visit by SEU. Additional reports, documents, and information were made available for review by the team at the time of the visit. Individual consultations and discussions were held by Dr. Vladimir Krcmery & Dr. Juraj Benca throughout the entire site visit as needed to confirm information reported, clarify observations, and obtain additional information. The team reviewed the “Internal Evaluation Report on Internal System Alignment of St. Elizabeth University of the Health & Social Work with SAAVS Standards for Internal System” (Bralislava 2022). Administration & operational policies & procedures were reviewed as needed. The English version of “Service & Home Topics” was reviewed and websites examined. Information on Tropic Team Projects were discussed and reviewed the “Realization of European Directive for Education”. The accreditation team examined and reviewed information at all locations including, but not limited to, the following:

1. University mission, vision, & value statements
2. University structure & organization
3. Degree programs of study by location, length of study & faculty assignments

4. Demography & history of SEU
5. Quality assurance & policies
6. Internal regulations & policies
7. Student enrollments
8. University strategic objectives & planning
9. Participation by students & alumni
10. Powers & authority of key individuals, senior staff & stakeholders
11. Allocation of resources
12. Student assessment of teaching
13. Evaluation of graduates
14. Financial resources & reports
15. Policies on equity, discrimination, & inclusion
16. Scientific Council
17. Disciplinary regulations
18. Approval of programs of study
19. Course evaluations
20. Teaching methods & assessments in courses & across the curriculum
21. Admission criteria & policies
22. Academic advising & career advising
23. Qualifications of faculty
24. Ministry of Health directives
25. Compliment of faculty for each degree Program of Study (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor)
26. Faculty, staff, & student evaluations
27. Student academic records
28. Professional social requirements, teaching performance requirements, and requirements for research/scholarship by faculty
29. Research, publications, & grants
30. Practical study

The site team conducted visits to several locations including Bratislava, Nove Zamky, Skalica, Michalovce, Presov. Site visits were also conducted to program sites in and around Bratislava including shelters, humanitarian facilities, missionary & charity facilities & programs. Programs of study that were examined included social work, nursing, missiology, psychology, physical therapy, and dental technician.

V. FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

St. Elizabeth University (SEU) has maintained consistent enrollment of students since being incorporated as a non-profit organization in Bratislava on October 7, 2002 in accordance with Act No. 213/1997 of the Legal Code as amended. St. Elizabeth University has By-laws, Articles of Incorporation and is registered as a non-profit organization providing generally beneficial services such as education, training, research, scientific and technical services, information services in the field of nursing, social work, missiology, public health, and psychology. It is the opinion of the accreditation team that St. Elizabeth University has been complying with changes promulgated by the Ministry

of Health as well as new policies and regulations that had been enacted by Parliament. SEU appears to be in compliance with European Union guidelines. St. Elizabeth has a mission and vision that differentiates itself from other public and private universities. The university has an appropriate governing structure and organizational framework that exists for the future growth and development of majors and degrees. Leadership remains strong with an administrative team of competent leaders and managers to support the current organization, locations, facilities, faculties, and students. These are appropriate affiliation agreements with health care providers, social agencies, and other affiliated business entities. St. Elizabeth has cooperative agreements with NGOs, other regional government agencies, and countries where humanitarian projects are located. The University has an institutional strategic plan that identifies measures to improve teaching, academic staff development, ways of improving the learning environment and lifelong learning. St. Elizabeth identifies that it does have international university alliances and activities with professional associations in several countries. These external affiliations are documented, monitored, and evaluated.

St. Elizabeth has established programs of study that have been approved by the appropriate university governing body and by the Minister of Health in the Slovak Republic. The university has achieved national accreditation for designated programs of study in social work, nursing, public health, psychology, dental technician, & physical therapy.

The university has specific characteristics that must be met with respect to all programs of study. A unique feature is that St. Elizabeth University has full time study and part time study. It was further determined by the accreditation team that all programs of study at all locations have appropriate facilities, equipment and supplies that are sufficient to support the mission, goals, and objectives of St. Elizabeth University (SEU).

It was also determined that there is no discrimination on the basis of gender, age, creed, race, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation in any aspects of the degrees of study at all locations. All programs of study at site locations appear to be in full compliance with relevant university policy. It is recognized that all program locations have a process in place for handling formal student complaints and faculty concerns. The University has a defined policy of academic freedom and academic standards for faculty performance in all degree programs of study.

The accreditation team also identified several strengths that are noteworthy.

1. It was determined that at all program locations the faculty had backgrounds that demonstrated they were academically and/or professionally qualified.
2. The number of faculty who have applied professional experiences and are currently working in the health care industry proves to be exceptionally beneficial to the student teaching process and use of relevant and current information.
3. The university faculty incorporate integrated experiences, including field-based applications, that require students to draw upon, apply and synthesize knowledge and skills covered throughout the degree program of study.

4. SEU through its programs, degrees and faculty are able to address real social problems that exist in the Slovak Republic and require trained and qualified graduates to address educational, social, and political reforms.
5. SEU is one of the only universities in Europe that focuses on global solidarity in the development and application of international networks on a global scale.
6. SEU is committed to addressing issues of social justice, and creating an inclusive university community for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and administration.
7. Use of subject matter experts is appropriate and relevant in all professional degree programs.
8. Use of public-private partnership models are critical to enhance student learning outcomes and development of competencies.
9. Locations of programs of study align with the needs of students and communities.
10. Study abroad opportunities are excellent and consistent with the mission of the university.
11. SEU has a mission & vision that is shared & embraced by the student, faculty, staff, administration & alumni. “The Spirit of St. Elizabeth” is practiced externally & apparent in the community and across teaching locations.
12. Faculty teaching at SEU care about students and students recognize that the faculty-student relationship is positive & supportive. The level of respect is evident in discussions held with faculty & students. A strong learning environment & high student motivation leads to student learning outcomes that increase employability upon graduation.
13. SEU has faculty who are nationally & internationally recognized as experts
14. The new programs in Rescue, OBGYN assistant, & physical therapy/rehabilitation at Nove Zamky appears to be meeting a community need resulting in increased students.
15. Modifying course content where appropriate for international students.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following site visit recommendations are based on observations, documentation reviewed, interviews & evidence found during the 5 days of the accreditation site visit from October 7 – 12, 2022. The recommendations are made in an effort to continuously improve the quality of education for students enrolled at St. Elizabeth University and student outcomes in all programs of study.

1. Consistency in applied practical teaching for students is needed across disciplines and settings. This is especially true for social work, dental assistants, and psychology students.
2. The level of faculty response to student concerns should be monitored to increase timeliness of response & insure consistency across all programs of study & locations.
3. A formal program on student-to-student mentoring should be encouraged in those disciplines with undergraduate & master level degree programs of study.

4. Use of technology for teaching should be uniform across majors and locations.
5. Faculty should discuss & implement increased opportunities for interprofessional education among the health professions.
6. SEU should consider expanding masters level training especially in psychology & social work in additional locations.
7. The university website needs to be current, contain useful information for the public on all programs, be accessible & easy to navigate.
8. All practical training experience should be evaluated by the faculty of record for the course, the student & the preceptor. Outcome evaluation data should be used to improve the program & curriculum.
9. A student academic record / file should be accessible at each university location / campus & be available to the student & faculty. Furthermore, academic notations are needed in the academic record to monitor student academic progress & career progression.
10. External applied practical experience should be available for all students at all course locations.
11. Social work students should be required to complete a capstone project at the end of study to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies.
12. All dental students should have supervised interactive & observational experiences with active dental patients in a private practice setting.
13. Succession planning for faculty should be part of the academic strategic planning process to ensure continuity in the educational environment
14. Although SEU has involved alumni, a stronger alumni organization is needed to provide current students with external mentorship, job placement, career opportunities, advocacy, & input on current information needed in the profession.
15. All students need a professional identity and code of ethics that provide a foundation and framework for professionalism.
16. In all courses of study, faculty should develop standards & behaviors that are needed by students to be “Fit-For-The-Profession”.

17. Students need to develop increased social relationships and activities to build a network of future colleagues & to establish a formal student organization. Increased social engagement is needed post COVID-19.
18. Course evaluations should be completed at the end of each course and outcome evaluations used to inform faculty of possible areas for teaching improvement.
19. Course evaluations need to be re-evaluated for relevancy, assessment metrics, and useful collection of data to improve the curriculum & program of study.
20. Faculty need to evaluate teaching methods used in course across the curriculum & determine higher level vs. lower level teaching methods appropriate for all courses.
21. Consider a new program of study in criminal justice, especially for social work students.
22. Consider using a competency based model with a CQI process tied to the SEU mission. Utilize evidence-based methods in all programs with a strong focus on student competency attainment.
23. SEU efforts in helping Ukrainian refugees at two points of entry is commendable & consistent with the mission of the university. Humanitarian efforts should be encouraged and student involvement increased.
24. Consider developing a new Master of Psychology in Bratislava at SEU
25. Continue to involve students, alumni, and practitioners in appropriate areas of decision making & evaluation and use outcome data to improve the curriculum and program.
26. Increase the number of opportunities for students to access study abroad as part of their academic studies.
27. Consider using interdisciplinary teams from nursing, social work, public health, and psychology to address social determinants of health for marginalized populations living in The Slovak Republic.
28. Ensure that career preparedness is monitored, documented and used for continuous improvement of the curriculum & program.
29. All programs of study must demonstrate that they evaluate the relevancy of technology and course content, and use the outcome data to drive

quality improvement in the curriculum, course content, and course innovations.

30. Develop and document that the university has institutional learning objectives (ILOs), assessment of student-learning outcomes (SLOs), assessment of program-learning outcomes (PLOs) that meet the educational goals established at SEU for quality education.
31. Consider developing a new Master of Science in Environmental Health.
32. Discernment (individual, vocational, spiritual) and reflective writing should be encouraged in courses to improve student formation and intellectual development.
33. Create “stackable” certificates on top of degree programs to attract more adults to engage in life-long learning. Create specialized areas for advanced certifications.
34. Collect outcomes data on graduates 5 years past graduation to determine if SEU has adequately prepared students for their careers.
35. Consider offering international degree programs with existing partnerships.

VII. ACCREDITATION DECISION

A. Final Recommendation

The accreditation team recommends that all academic programs of study at the bachelor degree & master degree levels at St. Elizabeth University in the areas of missiology, public health, nursing, dental assistant, social work, and psychology be accredited. The accreditation team recommends that the tropical medicine program continue as developed. New programs of study should be explored and developed to meet community needs.

B. Length of Accreditation

The accreditation team recommends accreditation for 5 years in all programs of study through 2027.

C. Progress Report

The team recommends a self-study progress report to be completed in 3 years (2025) addressing progress in meeting recommendations.

D. Next Site Visit

The team recommends a site visit in Spring, 2027.

Daniel J. West, Jr., Chair

Date