

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN ATHLETIC TRAINING**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to establish a new Master of Science Program in Athletic Training in the Graduate College.

Executive Summary: The proposed program will replace the Health and Human Physiology subprogram in Athletic Training. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to “ensure access to education and student success.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of proposed program.** The Athletic Training subprogram within the Master of Science Program in Health and Human Physiology is designed primarily as an advanced clinical education and research area of study for certified athletic trainers. Emphasis is on developing and applying a research and education base to the knowledge and skills of the entry-level athletic trainer. The program focuses on a health-care-team approach to sports medicine, medical care management, wellness, pediatric/adolescent health, and special health populations. The subprogram is designed as a terminal degree for athletic trainers. Therefore, it is offered only as a Master of Science degree without thesis. It includes the application of established research findings to problems encountered in everyday practice.

The proposed program will become a two-year standalone program and will include 62 semester hours of coursework and clinical experiences that will prepare students to become certified athletic trainers; it will also comply with changes in accreditation standards for the entry-level credential into the field of athletic training. By 2022, all accredited programs in athletic training will be required to be at the Master of Science degree level. The proposed program will help students develop the skills necessary to become proficient in musculoskeletal injury prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation as well as other pertinent physician extender roles. The proposed program will be offered as a non-thesis program; however, a thesis option will be available for those students who desire a research experience.

- ◇ **Academic objectives.** The following student outcomes have been identified:
 - ⇒ Maximize high quality resources and opportunities available on campus and in the community.
 - ⇒ Integrate coursework with inter-professional opportunities during the professional development phase of the program.
 - ⇒ Retain select research elements of the current graduate program.
 - ⇒ Arrange clinical experiences during the final year with an application process for clinical positions.

- ◇ Need for proposed program. Education in the field of athletic training is overseen by the Commission on Accreditation for Athletic Training Education. As a result of significant increases in the knowledge base related to athletic training during the last decades and growing complexity in the health care system, the Commission concluded that adequate education in athletic training should build upon a solid education in natural sciences and/or allied health-related areas. The Commission recommended that athletic training education should be delivered to students only at the graduate level after successful completion of a bachelor's degree that includes relevant pre-requisite coursework.

To implement this recommendation, the Commission will no longer accredit undergraduate programs in athletic training. Beginning in 2022, only athletic training programs at the graduate level (Master of Science) will be accredited by the Commission. In addition, the Commission will require that graduate programs in athletic training be standalone programs, not subtracks or tracks. Graduates' diplomas must identify athletic training as the degree objective. In order to meet the new Commission requirements, the University proposes to close the existing subprogram in athletic training in the Master of Science Program in Health and Human Physiology and implement the proposed program.

- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The college's mission is to blend high quality educational and health care resources with exemplary service and clinically relevant research to create a seamless environment where growth and development are outcomes of daily activities. This can be achieved by (1) ensuring that students are prepared to address health and safety issues in professional athletic training services related to pediatric and adult population; (2) directing the program to inspire and guide students with multi-disciplinary events on campus and career discussions; (3) promoting scholarship in athletic training and interdisciplinary health care research to enhance student engagement, produce creative works, create opportunity, and support learning competency; and (4) ensuring that students will be able to engage and learn approaches to health care that will add to successful professional development through cross-discipline experiences.

- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at SUI. Athletic training collaborates with the university's orthopedics and athletics to provide didactic and clinical experiences for students. There is additional collaboration with faculty in the College of Public Health and the Departments of Pediatrics and Family Practice in the College of Medicine. These collaborations will be maintained and enhanced through academic-practice partnerships that include mutual goals to enhance education and practice. Joint appointments in orthopedics will allow the athletic training program to better meet the educational needs of athletic training students in the area of sports medicine, assist with student recruitment and retention, and strengthen the link between clinical practice and education. There will be no duplication of athletic training programs within the university.

- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. Currently, there is one entry-level athletic training program offered at the master's degree level. UNI's graduate program was approved at the April 2016 Board of Regents meeting (ASAC 7a1). The move to the master's degree in athletic training required by accreditation standards will likely limit the number of programs in athletic training in Iowa. Currently, other programs in the state serve a specific need in the state since all accredited athletic training education programs are limited in size to meet accreditation standards in clinical education. Iowa State University is preparing to submit a proposal to meet accreditation standards for its athletic training program.

- ◇ Unique features. The environment of patient care in a hospital and clinic setting combined with its facilities and events is unique in Iowa play a significant role in student success. The facilities and equipment needed to offer an undergraduate program in athletic training is similar in quantity and quality to those of entry-level programs at the master's degree level. Therefore, the undergraduate resources, including faculty, facilities, and equipment, are those that will also be required for the initiation of the proposed program and will be readily transitioned and repurposed.
- ◇ Resources. The proposed program will replace the existing subprogram in Athletic Training. Therefore, the existing personnel, facilities, and equipment will be used to support the proposed standalone program.
- ◇ Student demand. There has been demonstrated interest from approximately 50 students each year during the past five years. Recently there has been an increase of student interest in demand for athletic trainers in health care and in areas of current attention, such as the military and the Olympics.
- ◇ Duplication. Currently, there is only one approved entry-level master's degree program in the state – UNI's program was approved by the Board of Regents in April 2016. Several other colleges and universities, have either begun developing a proposal to offer the program or will likely develop a proposal, including Graceland University, Buena Vista University, Iowa State University, Loras College, Northwestern College, and Upper Iowa University.
- ◇ Workforce need/demand. The national projections show that athletic training interest will continue to rise during the next 10 years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (December 17, 2015) shows an anticipated increase of 21% in job outlook which is much faster than expected between 2012 and 2024.
- ◇ Consultation with representatives of other programs. Coe College will not pursue a master's degree level program; they have asked to affiliate with the University of Iowa in coordinating pre-requisite courses for the benefit of their undergraduate students and potentially to become an affiliate site for clinical experiences.
- ◇ Cost. The University indicated that the financial resources are already in place for the subprogram and will support the proposed standalone program. There will be no new costs associated with the program. Existing costs were not identified.
- ◇ Projected enrollment. The enrollment is expected to be 18 students during year one, increasing to 36 by year seven.
- ◇ Anticipated sources of students. Students completing the undergraduate program in Health and Human Physiology are likely to enroll in the proposed program.
- ◇ Articulation agreement. The subprogram is currently affiliated with City High School, West High School, and Regina High School for the purpose of exposing students to pediatric health care. Formal agreements with these schools have been reviewed on campus and by the accrediting agency. The University anticipates expanding to two physical therapy clinics in Iowa City and private college in Cedar Rapids. The expansion will undergo the same accreditation standards and University review as the other agreements of affiliation required by the accrediting agency.

- ◇ Letters of support. There were no letters of support included in the proposal.
- ◇ Off-campus delivery. The current program will be offered only on campus.
- ◇ Accreditation. The Health and Human Physiology program and Athletic Training subprogram is currently accredited for a minimum of four years.
- ◇ Opportunities for internships. The proposed program will provide opportunities on and off campus.
- ◇ Marketing plan. Upon approval of the proposed program, relationships with the academic advising center will assist in the transition from the subprogram to the standalone program. Alumni support has been a strong factor in recruiting. Career center information and guidance will be an important feature of the recruiting plan. The existing “Exploring Athletic Training” class is offered at the undergraduate level for entering freshmen and will continue to provide career exploration to recruit students. Website information will also be used to recruit students. The existing subprogram will also be used as a recruitment tool with particular attention paid to the accreditation standard changes. On-campus observation opportunities will familiarize students with the working environment of athletic training, the professionals who work in this career, and an opportunity to interact with students in the program.
- ◇ Evaluation plan. Programmatic and systems-based questions will be used to direct objectives and develop outcomes and their assessment. The plan will include the following purposes:
 - ⇒ To determine if the intended outcomes are being achieved;
 - ⇒ To validate the need to undertake and continue program initiatives;
 - ⇒ To identify areas of program strengths that are central to the mission of the College and University;
 - ⇒ To inform faculty and other internal and external decision-makers about relevant issues affecting student learning and the program;
 - ⇒ To determine how well the program fulfills its mission;
 - ⇒ To provide information regarding policy and practices;
 - ⇒ To track placement of graduates and their accomplishments;
 - ⇒ To determine how the policies and practices of the program can be improved;
 - ⇒ To determine compliance with educational standards promoted by the accrediting agency and their supporting agencies.
- ◇ Transition. To fulfill the accreditation standards, the University will close the existing subprogram in Athletic Training within the Master of Science Program in Health and Human Physiology in Spring 2018 and implement the proposed standalone program. The University’s role as the center for health care programs in the state, there will be emphasis on collaboration with health care educators and cross-collaboration leading to physician extender skills for athletic trainers, which is a growing area of development in the field of athletic training.

- ◇ Criteria for admission. To be admitted, students must have met the following criteria:
 - ⇒ All pre-requisite courses successfully completed (or in progress) with a C or above by the time of application.
 - ⇒ University of Iowa cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or above.
 - ⇒ GRE scores at the 50th percentile or better for either verbal or quantitative subscore. International students must show a TOEFL minimum score of 550 for the paper based test, unless applicants have received a degree from an accredited school in the United States.
 - ⇒ A minimum of 60 required experiential hours, including volunteer, observation, work experience in athletic training or other health care practice settings and service learning.

- ◇ Advising. Students will be advised by a departmental mentor. A Preliminary Plan of Study will be established during the students' first academic session.

- ◇ Date of implementation. Creation of the proposed program will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog. The anticipated implementation date is Spring 2018.