

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY:  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN ATHLETIC TRAINING/ATHLETIC TRAINER**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by Iowa State University to establish a new Bachelor of Science Program in Athletic Training/Athletic Trainer in the Department of Kinesiology in the College of Human Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed program will respond to the requirements of the accrediting agency that the university must offer a stand-alone degree program in athletic training to meet the standards for accreditation. 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 priorities to “provide educational excellence and impact as well as economic development and vitality.”

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of proposed program.** Athletic trainers are health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to optimize physical activity and performance. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and intervention of emergency, acute, and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations, and disabilities. It involves the organization and administration of athletic training education programs, as well as the education and counseling of athletes. Program graduates seek employment in numerous settings, including secondary schools, colleges and universities, professional sports, sports medicine clinics, the military, and industrial and commercial settings.
- ◇ **Relationship to existing programs at ISU.** The proposed program is not new at ISU; it has been in existence since the 1980s. However, it has existed as an option in athletic training within the Bachelor of Science Program in Kinesiology and Health in the Department of Kinesiology. Initial accreditation for the Bachelor of Science Program in Kinesiology and Health was received in 2001. However, recently, the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) mandated that athletic training education programs must be stand-alone degree programs to maintain accreditation – “By 2014-2015, individuals completing entry-level programs in athletic training must be awarded a degree in athletic training.”<sup>1</sup>

Graduates cannot become candidates to sit for the National Athletic Trainers Association certification examination and become certified athletic trainers licensed in the profession unless they complete an accredited athletic training education program. Continuing to offer athletic training as an option in the Bachelor of Science Program in Kinesiology and Health jeopardizes its accreditation status. The proposal to create a stand-alone program is in response to the CAATE requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> Standards for the Accreditation of Entry-Level Athletic Training Education Programs.

- ◇ Objectives of the program. The proposed program will (1) prepare athletic training students for the certification examination; (2) produce high quality athletic trainers for employment in educational, clinical, and professional settings; (3) provide athletic training students opportunities to develop their skills in the classroom and in clinical settings; and (4) foster athletic training as a component of the sports medicine team. The program combines a strong didactic foundation with diverse clinical experiences. It has established ties with ISU Athletics, local physical therapy clinics, high schools, and Drake University for clinical placement of undergraduate students to provide the necessary clinical experiences.
- ◇ Relationship of proposed program to ISU mission and strategic plan. The mission of the proposed program to provide a high quality undergraduate education by instilling in students intellectual curiosity as well as knowledge and skills essential for their development complements the University's mission to "create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place." The proposed program will address the needs of communities, schools, and other organizations by linking discovery, science, creativity, and practice; applying the knowledge of learning in all endeavors; and developing leaders for roles in education, business and industry, and health and human services.
- ◇ Relationship of proposed program to other units. There is a collaborative relationship between the Department of Kinesiology and ISU Athletics. The Department of Kinesiology will continue to serve as the academic home for the proposed program. Athletic training students will take common core classes in kinesiology with students in other academic options. General education and supporting courses from other departments will be used to meet program requirements. Students in the proposed program may also gain experience by providing first aid services to other departments, academic clubs, social organizations, intramural activities, and other groups. Students will participate in outreach activities where they will have opportunities to develop their management, leadership, people, and problem-solving skills.
- ◇ Unique features. ISU is the only land grant institution in Iowa to provide undergraduate athletic training students with extensive clinical hands-on experience during their sophomore year. It is the only program in the state to have all full-time clinical athletic trainers serve as didactic instructors as well as clinical supervisors and approved clinical instructors. Both the Athletic Training Program Director and the Clinical Coordinator have joint clinical appointments with the Department of Athletics which strengthens the relationship between academics and athletics.
- ◇ Duplication. The University of Northern Iowa and the University of Iowa have undergraduate athletic training education degree programs. Ten other institutions in Iowa also have athletic training programs – Buena Vista University, Central College, Clarke University, Coe College, Graceland University, Loras College, Luther College, Northwestern College, Simpson College, and Upper Iowa University.

Stringent accreditation standards result in similar didactic requirements across all programs; minor differences exist in clinical experiences and program philosophies. Enrollment limitations exist in all programs as a result of CAATE policies regarding supervision of student clinical experiences. The CAATE recommended ratio of students to clinical supervisor is 8:1.

Most of ISU's graduates tend to seek employment as athletic trainers in a collegiate setting, whereas other schools in the state have a stronger emphasis on placing graduates in physical therapy school or in a high school setting.

- ◇ Student demand. The program appeals to a wide group of students interested in an allied health profession combined with the appeal of working with the physically active. Enrollment in the athletic training option in Kinesiology has increased during the past five years from 85 to 105 students. Student demand for the option continues to exceed the department's capacity to admit students because CAATE policies for student supervision limit program enrollment.
- ◇ Workforce need/demand. Upon completion of the proposed program, students will have the opportunity to be a candidate for the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) Board of Certification examination which is mandatory for most positions. According to the NATA, athletics programs at the professional, college/university, and secondary school levels remain the primary employment path for certified athletic trainers. In addition, there are "emerging settings" for employment, including hospitals and health clinics, occupational health in industry, the military, performing arts, and public safety.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, "Athletic trainers held about 16,300 jobs in 2008 and were found in every part of the country. About 39% were found in public and private educational services, primarily in colleges, universities, and high schools. Another 38% worked in health care, including jobs in hospitals, offices of physicians, and offices of other health practitioners. About 13% worked in fitness and recreational sports centers. Around 5% worked in spectator sports."<sup>2</sup>

The Bureau of Labor Statistics also notes: "Employment of athletic trainers is projected to grow 37% from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations, because of their role in preventing injuries and reducing healthcare costs. Job growth will be concentrated in the healthcare industry, including hospitals and offices of health practitioners. Fitness and recreation sports centers also will provide new jobs, as these establishments grow and continue to need additional athletic trainers to provide support for their clients. Growth in positions with sports teams will be somewhat slower, however, as most professional sports clubs and colleges and universities already have complete athletic training staffs.

The demand for healthcare, with an emphasis on preventive care, should grow as the population ages and as a way to reduce healthcare costs. Increased licensure requirements and regulation has led to a greater acceptance of athletic trainers as qualified healthcare providers. As a result, third-party reimbursement is expected to continue to grow for athletic training services. Athletic trainers will benefit from this expansion because they provide a cost-effective way to increase the number of health professionals in an office or other setting."

- ◇ Resources. Existing personnel, facilities, and equipment will be used for the proposed program. These resources meet or exceed minimum CAATE requirements. Seven full-time certified athletic trainers who have split appointments between the Department of Kinesiology and ISU Athletics teach the didactic and clinical components of the program. Clinical supervisors from Drake University, Ames High School, McFarland Clinic, and Mary Greeley Medical Center strengthen the clinical experiences of the students.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos294.htm#employ>

Six athletic training clinical facilities (Feldman Athletic Health Care Center, Sukup Basketball Facility, Beyer Hall, Lied Recreational Center, Forker Building, and Hilton Coliseum) are located on campus. Clinical facilities at Drake, McFarland Clinic, and Ames High School also support the clinical experiences of students. All contain state-of-the-art equipment; students are exposed to the latest technologies and therapeutic techniques.

- ◇ Cost. The cost of the proposed program is expected to be \$140,000 in Year 1. The Department of Kinesiology will allocate \$103,400 and the Department of Athletics will allocate \$36,600 to support the proposed program. The anticipated cost of the proposed program will be \$167,167 by Year 7.
- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected enrollment in the program is expected to be 50 students in Year 1 increasing to 65 students by Year 7. A similar enrollment of non-majors is also projected. Non-majors are pre-athletic training students who have identified the athletic training education program as their preferred option but are completing prerequisite coursework and observational clinical experiences prior to being considered for admission. Non-majors cannot enroll in the clinical sequence courses until they are formally admitted into the program. As non-majors, these students will be enrolled in the Kinesiology and Health Program in the Department of Kinesiology.
- ◇ Proposed implementation date. The proposed program will become effective immediately upon approval by the Board of Regents. Students currently enrolled in the athletic training option who graduate in Spring 2012 will be designated as graduates of the Bachelor of Science Program in Athletic Training. Future students will be admitted into the dedicated program, rather than the option in the Kinesiology and Health Program.