

Program Planning Summary

Exercise Science Major, B.S.

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "P. George Benson" in a cursive style.

P. George Benson, President
February 1, 2010

Contact Information:

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College of Charleston
66 George Street
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Program Planning Summary

Designation of New Program: Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science (replacing a concentration) AB/BS, four year program, CIP Code 310505

STEM Program Designation: Students will qualify for supplemental Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and LIFE Scholarships.

Academic Unit: Department of Health and Human Performance
School of Education, Health, and Human Performance
College of Charleston
66 George Street
Charleston, SC 29424

Proposed date of implementation: Fall 2011

Number of Credit Hours in Program: 48

Justification of Need

The Department of Health and Human Performance at the College of Charleston currently has a concentration in exercise science under the umbrella of a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education. There are approximately 120 students in our exercise science concentration preparing for careers in exercise science fields or for graduate study in allied health professions (e.g., physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician's assistant, and medical school). The request to move to a B.S. in Exercise Science will: 1) give the College of Charleston a degree name comparable with the majority of our peer institutions, 2) give us a recognizable degree name which will allow us to more directly recruit potential students, and 3) provide a degree that is immediately recognized and accepted by graduate programs in exercise science.

Several societal and lifestyle factors have led to dramatic increases in obesity and sedentary lifestyles. In 2008, 50-54% of adults in Charleston County had a BMI of 25 or higher (BMI ≥ 25 classifies an adult as being overweight; ≥ 30 classifies an adult as being obese). In the border counties of Dorchester and Colleton the rate jumped to more than 70%. South Carolina ranked 5th on the state-by-state list of obesity rates, but the obesity epidemic is becoming a world-wide problem—increasing the need for well-trained and knowledgeable graduates with an exercise science major. There is a growing need for students to work in corporate fitness, cardiac rehabilitation, physical therapy, wellness, strength and conditioning, and other careers in exercise science. Converting the exercise science concentration to a major will help to fill that need.

While developing a major in exercise science, we will concurrently seek accreditation from the American College of Sports Medicine and/or credentialing from the National Strength and Conditioning Association, which will enhance the regional and national visibility of our program.

Anticipated Program Demand and Productivity

There are currently 120 physical education majors in the exercise science concentration in the Department of Health and Human Performance at the College of Charleston. Exercise Science is a nationally recognized degree and is the degree name used by an overwhelming majority of institutions designated as peer institutions by the College of Charleston. In addition, incoming students now recognize exercise science not only as the degree name for training in careers in the exercise and fitness field, but for the pursuit of graduate degrees in exercise science sub-disciplines (exercise physiology and biomechanics), physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician's assistant, and medicine.

At present, students find our exercise science concentration too frequently through "word-of-mouth" among their classmates. One of our department goals is to make our exercise science program more visible on campus. We believe changing our program to a major in exercise science will help us accomplish our goal of improved visibility. Quite often, students do not find the exercise science concentration in their web search, making it less likely that they will find us early in their College of Charleston experience. We want our students to experience a smooth and efficient transition into the department.

Demand for the exercise science concentration has grown considerably over the last decade. A degree name consistent with the areas of study students will pursue for their graduate work will increase interest in the program.

Assessment of Extent to Which the Proposed Program Duplicates Existing Programs in the State

The exercise science concentration in the Department of Health and Human Performance at the College of Charleston is providing an excellent educational background and experiences for our undergraduate students. Converting the concentration to a major will help us achieve our aforementioned goals of providing a degree name comparable to our peer institutions, enhancing our recruiting, and improving visibility. Other B.S. programs in Exercise Science at South Carolina institutions include: USC Aiken, Lander University, Coastal Carolina University, and The Citadel, but the demand for study in the exercise science concentration at the College of Charleston remains strong and has increased steadily over the past several years.

The majority of our undergraduate students in the exercise science concentration are interested in pursuing graduate study in physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician's assistant, and medicine, and we have a close professional and working relationship with the allied health programs at MUSC. Our current exercise science curriculum prepares students for admission to the Medical University of South Carolina and the University of South Carolina allied health and medicine programs.

Relationship of the Proposed Program to Existing Programs at the Proposed Institution

The Exercise Science major will complement other programs in the department which include Physical Education Teacher Certification and Health Promotion (the remaining concentrations in the B.S. in Physical Education), and Athletic Training. Several departmental core courses taught by exercise science faculty (Concepts in Fitness Assessment and Exercise Prescription, PEHD 210; Kinesiology, PEHD 330; and Exercise Physiology, PEHD340) are taken by all students in the department. The common bond of the various programs is the scientific core required of all students. The Department of Health and Human Performance has excellent working relationships with the Biology Department and the School of Sciences and

Mathematics. In spring semester 2009, more than 50 senior exercise science students participated in the School of Sciences and Mathematics research poster session.

There are no competing allied health programs at the College of Charleston, and no programs directly compete for students who would pursue exercise science careers. If the degree is approved, the Department of Health and Human Performance will work closely with the Admissions Office to develop a recruiting plan at high-school and college campus events.

Relationship of the Proposed Program to the Other Institutions via Inter-Institutional Cooperation

The College of Charleston and the Department of Health and Human Performance are eager to collaborate with other institutions and programs engaged in similar initiatives. The current exercise science faculty has established a strong track record of collaborative grants and scholarly work with other individuals and exercise science programs at The Citadel and MUSC, Purdue University, University of Connecticut, University of Louisville, the University of Southern Mississippi, and Edith Cowan University (Australia).

Total New Costs Associated with Implementing the Program

There are currently 3.5 tenure track/senior instructor faculty members in exercise science. We are interviewing candidates to fill the visiting professor line in exercise science, which will convert a visiting assistant professor line into a tenure track position for the 2010-11 academic year. This position will fill a line vacated by retirement from another area in the department.

The library resources are already in place, with minimal cost to expand holdings over five years (approximately \$5,000). No new or unique costs are needed for a laboratory-based academic support facility. There are also no new administrative costs anticipated with the change from a concentration to an exercise science major. If the program grows as anticipated, there will be requests for new lines and supporting resources in the future.