

**New Program Proposal
Bachelor of Science
Athletic Training
USC-Columbia**

Summary

USC-Columbia requests approval to offer a new program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training, to be implemented in Fall 2011. The existing concentration in Athletic Training within the program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Physical Education will be terminated upon approval and implementation of the proposed program of study.

The Program Planning Summary was submitted to the Commission on Higher Education on November 4, 2009, and reviewed and voted upon favorably without substantive comment by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) on January 14, 2010. USC's Board of Trustees approved the final proposal on April 23, 2010. The final proposal was received by the Commission on May 11, 2010.

According to the proposal, the purpose of the program is to prepare students for employment and for continued study in graduate programs. USC-Columbia currently offers a concentration in athletic training through the existing Bachelor of Science in Physical Education. The accrediting agency for athletic training, the Commission on Accreditation in Athletic Training Education (CAATE), requires that that accredited athletic training programs be majors rather than concentrations. One of the issues that was addressed during the USC program's most recent CAATE accreditation visit in 2009 was the need to modify the existing concentration in athletic training to a degree program. The proposal states that the request for the proposed program is in part to meet this accreditation requirement. In addition, however, the proposal states that, independent of any professional certification requirement, there is a need and demand for a program which provides graduates with a strong academic and clinical background in athletic training.

The proposal cites the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Occupational Outlook Handbook* which states that employment in the field of athletic training will increase 37% in the next decade. The rising cost of healthcare in the United States has increased the demand for athletic trainers in traditional and nontraditional sites such as high school and college sports programs, professional sports teams, industrial settings, sports medicine clinics, the military, fitness and recreational settings, hospitals, out-patient clinics, physicians' offices, wellness centers, corporate business, and the U.S. military. Also, high school administrators are encouraged to hire athletic trainers to enhance their sports programs and reduce the number of injuries and even deaths of high school athletics. The proposal also cites a report by the National Athletic Trainers' Association which found that over 70% of certified athletic trainers have post-graduate degrees.

Six universities in the state besides USC-Columbia currently have accredited undergraduate programs in athletic training. Of these, three are public (Winthrop University, the College of Charleston, and Lander University) and three are private (Charleston Southern University, Erskine College, and Limestone College). The proposal states that all of the programs offer similar course offerings as required by CAATE, but that each caters to a unique student population. The Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training is currently being offered by five of the state's institutions. According to the proposal the facilities, resources, and extent of clinical sites will allow USC-Columbia to be a competitive program.

The institution anticipates there will be 20 new students (20.4 FTE) in the program's first year, increasing to 40 students (37.9 FTE) in the second year, and further increasing to 70 students (67.9 FTE) by the fifth year of the program. The institution estimates that approximately 50 (47.9 FTE) currently enrolled students will enroll in the program. If enrollment and program completion projections are met, the proposed program will meet the commission's productivity standards.

In addition to meeting requirements to the College of Education and Department of Physical Education and Athletic Training, admission to the proposed program will require students to meet additional academic requirements, have completed specified clinical experiences, and submit additional documentation. Admitted students will have completed: completed five core athletic training courses with a minimum GPA of 2.75; met athletic training education program (ATEP) requirements; have a current physical examination; and, have completed a minimum of 70 hours of directed observation with a USC Approved Clinical Instructor.

The proposed program will consist of 128-134 credit hours depending on whether the student is required to take additional courses in order to meet the foreign language requirement. The coursework will include the athletic training core requirements (57 hours); physical education core requirements (21 hours); and general education requirements (50-56 hours). No new courses will need to be added to USC-Columbia's college catalog to support the program.

The proposal states that the assessment of student learning will be tied to the mission of the Athletic Training Education Program, which also guides the program's didactic and clinical instruction. Students are evaluated through examinations, projects, clinical rotations by the approved clinical instructors (ACI). Student exit interviews and student evaluations of the clinical rotation site and the approved clinical instructor will be another component of the program's assessment of student learning.

The proposed program will require no new faculty, staff, or administrative personnel in the first five years of its implementation. Faculty in the athletic training department will be drawn from existing faculty currently teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. The program administration will be supervised by the undergraduate program's current program coordinator and athletic training clinical coordinator.

The proposal states that the existing Athletic Training education program is housed in the Blatt Physical Education Center, which has adequate space for classrooms, physical fitness activities, and athletic training rooms and that no new space or facilities are needed for implementation of the proposed program. The Williams-Brice Stadium and the coliseum athletic training rooms are also available for use as athletic training sites and clinical training sites. The proposal states that no new equipment is required for the proposed program.

According to the proposal, the Thomas Cooper Library provides adequate resources to support the proposed program with print and electronic resources including the statewide PASCAL databases, Interlibrary Loan, Internet access, bibliographic instruction, and a variety of class-specific user education programs. In addition, the physical education center has a media center which houses various resources such as videos, computers and software instructional aids for students' use.

The existing Athletic Training Education concentration has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) since 1996. The athletic training program's CAATE accreditation ensures that students are eligible to take the Board of Certification (BOC) examination.

The proposal states that admissions and transfer criteria will be the same as for all other students accepted into USC-Columbia undergraduate programs. The proposal also states that current articulation agreements in place with South Carolina's two-year institutions will apply.

According to the proposal no new costs are required for the successful implementation of the proposed athletic training program. That the proposal lists no new costs reflects the fact that the proposed program replaces the existing concentration in athletic training, which uses the same facilities, equipment, and faculty as the proposed program. Revenues will be generated through tuition funding and reallocation of existing funds. No "unique cost" or other special state appropriations will be required or requested.

In summary, USC-Columbia is proposing a program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training to begin in Fall 2011. The existing concentration in athletic training within the Bachelor of Science program in Physical Education will be terminated upon the implementation of the proposed program of study. The proposed program will prepare graduates for work in varied settings and for advanced academic work. Because the proposed program is the successor to the concentration in Athletic Training, there will be no additional costs to the institution or the state to implement the proposed program.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission approval of the program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training at USC-Columbia, to be implemented in Fall 2011, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested, and provided further that the existing concentration in Athletic Training within the Bachelor of Science in Physical Education be terminated upon the implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training.