

PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY

Master of Science (MS) in Athletic Training

**College of Education
Department of Physical Education and Athletic Training**

University of South Carolina--Columbia

Harris Pastides, President

Date

Commission on Higher Education Program Planning Summary

Name of Institution: University of South Carolina---Columbia
Designation: Department of Physical Education and Athletic Training
Name of Degree: Master of Science
Name of Program: Athletic Training
Number of credit hours in program: **36 hours**
If undergraduate, designation as four- or five-year program:
Program qualifies for supplemental Palmetto Fellows Scholarship/LIFE Scholarship awards: No
CIP Code: 51.0913
Proposed date of implementation: Fall 2012

Justification of need for the proposed program:

Since 1950, athletic trainers have been providing health care services to professional, college and high school athletes as well as the physically active population. Currently, national certification for athletic trainers is obtained through the Board of Certification (BOC) at the undergraduate level. However, recent statistics from the National Athletic Trainers Association indicates that of the 34,000 members, over 70% have a graduate-level degree. The typical model for many athletic trainers is to first complete an undergraduate degree and become a certified and licensed athletic trainer, then get hired on as graduate assistants at Universities with graduate programs to provide health care to athletes and various clinical sites. Most clinical sites will provide the athletic trainer with a graduate assistantship (tuition and stipend), and in return the athletic trainer will provide medical services for the athletes/patients.

For many years the athletic department here at USC hired graduate students to provide medical care for the athletes; however, no common MS degree was available for students and they wandered in and out of many different academic programs across the University. Today, a strong selling point for many graduate programs in athletic training is to provide an MS degree in athletic training and offer students an advanced set of skills and knowledge while working as BOC-certified athletic trainers. In 2005, a joint effort was initiated between the athletic department, department of orthopedics and the athletic training education program here at USC to begin planning a graduate program for athletic trainers. In the first year (2005), the graduate program here at USC obtained 11 service contracts totaling \$425,000 to provide athletic trainers to multiple sites around Columbia including USC athletics, Benedict College, SC State University, USC Campus Recreation, and local high schools. A total of 26 graduate students were hired off of these external contracts to serve as athletic trainers.

The Department of Physical Education already had a 36 hour MS degree in Physical Education, and a concentration in athletic training was added to it with the addition of 4 athletic training related graduate courses. The degree as it existed allowed for many electives, and athletic training students were able to formulate a solid graduate program through the addition of several athletic training related courses, including a gross anatomy course MCBA 710 and others. A research component was also added as part of PEDU 798 and students began to present research and publish in peer-related journals. For several years the MS in Physical Education with a

concentration in athletic training was very successful and students obtained a solid foundation of didactic and clinical education as well as a strong foundation in research. Because the MS in PE had experienced declining enrollments, it was decided to terminate all other concentrations of that program, and establish an entirely new MS degree with a major in Athletic Training. Since 2005, we have had yearly cohorts of between 10-18 students graduating with the current MS in PE degree. We believe there is a strong need for an MS degree in Athletic Training here at USC to continue to build on the progress that has been made over the past 5 years.

Anticipated program demand and productivity:

We feel strongly that an MS degree will be a great addition to an already strong graduate program. Since 2005, the graduate program has continually obtained service contracts to hire certified athletic trainers as graduate students. The following numbers are representative of the success of our program and it also provides a vision for the future.

2005	11 service contracts	26 graduate students	\$425,000
2006	7 service contracts	24 graduate students	\$414,000
2007	6 service contracts	*36 graduate students	*\$472,000
2008	5 service contracts	*33 graduate students	*\$429,000
2009	6 service contracts	25 graduate students	\$467,000
2010	8 service contracts	26 graduate students	\$486,000
2011	9 service contracts	26 graduate students	TBD

*additional 10 graduate students hired off of \$1.7 million grant with Ft. Jackson Army base to provide graduate assistant athletic trainers to the US Army

The graduate program here at USC has a solid track record of bringing in wonderful graduate students and we believe a MS degree in Athletic Training will allow us to bring in the best candidates from all over the country. Each year we have over 50 applications seeking a graduate assistant position in our program. Over the past 5 years we have had students from California, Texas, Ohio, Iowa, Michigan, Connecticut, New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Florida, and many other states across the country. Our mission is to continue to provide outstanding clinical experiences as well as build on our education program to attract the very best candidates. Here are the average GRE scores from the past three years of graduate students in our program:

- 2009: 990 (verbal/quant)
- 2010: 1030 (verbal/quant)
- 2011: 1125 (verbal/quant)

The productivity of this program is evident through the number of applications we receive each year (over 50 per year), as well as the placement of our graduates and recognition of our students through national, district and state scholarships. In the past 5 years, 9 of our graduate students have received a NATA-REF national scholarship and been recognized at our annual national convention. Many of our graduate students have also received district and state scholarships for their academic and clinical achievements here at USC. Graduates from our program have obtained jobs in settings such as the NFL, US Army, Cirque de Soleil, NY Dance Company, China, as well as more traditional settings such as high schools and colleges. Graduates from our program also meet a big need for the state of South Carolina in serving as teacher/athletic

trainers for high schools. Examples of athletic trainer placements from our program in the Columbia area over the past five years include; Airport HS, Whitmire HS, Richland NE HS, Spring Valley HS, Columbia HS, Columbia College, White Knoll HS, Pelion HS, and Swansea HS. The existing program was on the path to quickly becoming one of the premiere graduate athletic training programs in the country; the conversion to a more rigorous academic MS degree will only enhance the appeal of our program.

Assessment of extent to which the proposed program duplicates existing programs in the state:

To my knowledge there are no MS degrees in athletic training in any of the universities in South Carolina. Most of the graduate assistant athletic trainers at other state schools get their degree in various disciplines as they would not have the same number of students as USC. Most SC schools will have only a handful of graduate athletic training students. Our main competition for graduate students comes from UNC-Chapel Hill, University of Georgia, and University of Kentucky. We will not be duplicating any existing programs in South Carolina.

Relationship of the proposed program to existing programs at the proposing institution:

We currently have a strong relationship with the USC School of Medicine and the Department of Exercise Science in the Arnold School of Public Health. Since our MS in Physical Education allowed for several electives, for many years our students have been taking courses within both the School of Medicine and the Department of Exercise Science. The MCAB 710 course has been a wonderful course option for our students and we hope to continue that relationship in the future. Our students have also utilized many courses within Public Health's Health Promotion, Education and Behavior Department. We plan for our students continuing to have options within these disciplines as we formulate the MS in Athletic Training. We believe it makes our program stronger and more marketable to be able to demonstrate cross-disciplinary collaborations with such strong programs at USC.

Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation:

There is no relationship to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation

Total costs associated with implementing the proposed program (general estimates):

Since the program has been run for the past 6 years under a different degree option, we do not anticipate any new costs associated with this program. There are currently two graduate faculty members in the athletic training program who devote teaching and administrative time to this program. There is also administrative support from the Department. I would estimate the following:

Faculty 1:	30% of salary/time
Faculty 2:	20% of salary/time
Administrative personnel	15% of salary/time

General estimate of costs based on those figures: \$38,000