

## **Bachelors of Science in Athletic Therapy Program**

**Review Date:** February 21, 2020

**Review Team:**

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**Overview:**

The Review Team met with faculty the morning of the review process to discuss the program and review the schedule. At the onset of the day, the review team had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Yasman Simonian (Dean) and Dr. Ken Johnson (Associate Dean) of the Dumke College of Health Professions to discuss the transition of the Athletic Therapy/Athletic Training programs into the college. Following that meeting, the review team had the chance to meet with Dr. Conrad Gabler (Program Director, Bachelor of Science in Athletic Therapy), Dr. Alysisa Cohen (Assistant Professor of Athletic Training), Mrs. Hannah Stedge (Instructor of Athletic Training and Department Lab Coordinator) and Dr. Matthew Donahue (Assistant Professor of Athletic Training and Program Director, Master's of Science in Athletic Training) to discuss faculty's perspective of the program. Following, the review team was given a tour of the facilities and then given the chance to collaborate findings over lunch. The review team then had the opportunity to meet with Eric Neff and Brittany Maynard of the College of Health Professions Academic Advisement office. The review team then spent the afternoon meeting with a select number of current students in the Athletic Therapy program and then with Dr. Valeri Herzog (Chair, Department of Athletic Training). At the end of the day, the review team had a closing meeting with Drs. Herzog, Gabler and Cohen to discuss some of the general findings.

**Standard A – Mission Statement:**

- A. Are outcomes of program well defined?
- B. Are student accomplishments assessed by stakeholders?
- C. Is educational program clearly defined so graduates can meet goals?
- D. Does mission statement support college mission statement?

**Strengths:** The mission statement clearly outlines the expected outcomes of the Athletic Therapy program and identifies as a pre-professional program for multiple professions including Athletic Training, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant, and Medicine. The mission statement is in line with and shows support of the mission statements of the Dumke College of Health Professions as well Weber State University.

**Areas for Improvement:** The review team discussed and could not identify any areas for improvement within the program's mission statement.

**Standard B Curriculum:**

- A. Is there evidence of thoughtful curriculum planning and review?
- B. Is the curriculum consistent with mission?
- C. Are there resources to support the program?
- D. Are courses offered in a timely manner?

**Strengths:** The program curriculum is applicable with the requirements of the various graduate programs that are posted within the mission statement and provide the proper foundation for said programs. It was discovered that the pre-requisite courses do an effective job of preparing the students for various advanced degrees. Having the laboratory courses concurrent with the didactic curriculum allowed for integrative learning.

**Areas for Improvement:** Although the curriculum is appropriate, the current format of the program in which courses are offered at the student's discretion does not allow for a streamlined education. Students and faculty have expressed concern with the current model as it has resulted in delays to degree and program completion. Also, the completion of the current program does not provide students with potential employment related to the field of study without the completion of a graduate program.

**Recommendations:** It would be recommended, that courses be offered in a way that provides structure such as in progressive manner in which the student is aware of the requirements and the uniformity in which it is taught. This would also reduce advising errors that currently result in prolonged degree completion. The review team acknowledges the difficulty the suggested process may cause as there are multiple graduate programs that a student may apply to after completing the Athletic Therapy program. For this reason, the student is instructed to complete varying courses to meet the needs of their desired career path. Acknowledging these differences further justifies the need for a more streamlined path of education. Furthermore, it would also be suggested that there be tracks developed for each possible career path that would allow for the streamlined process.

The current curriculum clearly provides students with specific skills that will be useful as a foundation of knowledge for their chosen graduate program. However, the skills obtained within the Athletic Therapy program do not provide practical skills that allow for a form of employment at this time. It is understood that the faculty within the Athletic Therapy program are currently seeking potential certifications that can be added to the curriculum in order to provide students with employment opportunities. The review team encourages the investigation of these possibilities with the suggestion to find certifications or employable skills that align

closely with their current profession, noting that by simply adding an additional professional certification already offered in other programs may not provide a substantial justification to the Athletic Therapy program. With the implementation of additional certifications, it is advised to consider the impact of additional curriculum on overall program credit hours.

### **Standard C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments**

#### **Outcomes**

- A. Learning outcomes should reflect expected skills and behaviors achieved by graduation
- B. Learning outcomes support goals of program
- C. Learning outcomes linked to curriculum (with matrix)

#### **Assessment**

- A. Program has clearly defined assessment plan
- B. Each learning outcome has a direct measure that is public
- C. Evidence of learning is collected and reported regularly
- D. Program faculty meet regularly to discuss results
- E. Assessment results are being used to improve teaching & learning (i.e., close the loop)

**Strengths:** The program has clearly described student-learning outcomes and the review team has found that the outcomes have a direct correlation with the program curriculum. During discussions with the current students of the athletic therapy program, it was discovered that the learning outcomes provide the required skills that build the foundation for the specified graduate programs. The program uses written and oral practical examinations as assessment tools, which is standard for healthcare related education. The program faculty has recognized weaknesses in curriculum and overall course requirements during student assessments and has made proper adjustments in order to accommodate the professional needs of the students. Students were asked to complete exit surveys upon graduation in order to assess the program's ability to prepare students for graduate programs. The program director has determined that the exit survey provides greater benefits if it is distributed after every semester rather than waiting until graduation. The review committee commends the program for implementing the survey throughout the duration of the program as we agree that it will provide more accurate assessment data. The faculty also utilize the university's standard course evaluations delivered through Chitester.

**Areas for Improvement:** Although the program faculty have provided the students with assessment surveys more frequently, the current survey is tailored to graduating students.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the assessment survey that is distributed every semester be tailored in a way that asks specific questions regarding the student's status within the program.

### **Standard D. Academic Advising**

- A. They have a clearly defined strategy for advising their major/minor, or BIS students that is continually assessed for its effectiveness.
- B. Students receive appropriate assistance in planning their individual programs of study.
- C. Students receive needed assistance in making career decisions and in seeking placement, whether in employment or graduate school.

**Strengths:** The program faculty and advisors had recognized needed improvements regarding advising and have made great strides to make corrections and additions to improve the frequency and quality of advisement. The college advisement office is utilized for preprogram advisement. They have also implemented a more formal advisement process that requires the program director to assist the students in selecting courses that align with their desired graduate program choice. They are now utilizing their administrative assistant to provide academic advisement in addition to the program directors advisement.

**Areas for Improvement:** The areas needing improvement have already been addressed and corrected.

**Recommendations:** N/A

### **Standard E. Faculty**

- A. Faculty size, composition, qualifications, and professional development activities must result from a planning process which is consistent with the program's mission.
- B. The program maintains a core of full-time faculty sufficient to provide stability and ongoing quality improvement for the degree programs offered.
- C. Contract/adjunct faculty who provide instruction to students (day/evening, off/on campus) are academically and professionally qualified.
- D. The program should demonstrate efforts to achieve demographic diversity in its faculty.
- E. The program should have appropriate procedures for the orientation of new contract/adjunct faculty.
- F. Processes are in place to determine appropriate teaching assignments and service workloads, to guide and mentor contract/adjunct faculty, and to provide adequate support for activities which implement the program's mission.
- G. Teaching is systematically monitored to assess its effectiveness, and revised periodically to reflect new objectives and to incorporate improvements based on appropriate assessment methods. For both contract and adjunct faculty, there is evidence of:
  - Effective creation and delivery of instruction.
  - Ongoing evaluation and improvement of instruction.
  - Innovation in instructional processes.
- H. A formal, periodic review process must exist for all faculty.

**Strengths:** The faculty qualifications, composition, and professional development activities is consistent with programs mission. Faculty have shown continued efforts to be professionally engaged with an extensive list of active scholarly and professional involvement in professional societies, conferences, presentations, and professional peer reviewed publications. Faculty meet and exceed the expectations outlined for the Dumke College of Health Professions tenure and promotion. The department chair strives to align faculty strengths with courses within the program that will allow for greater student benefit. The faculty participate in curriculum retreats in order to evaluate and improve program quality and effectiveness. All faculty with the exception of one adjunct hold at least a master's degree with several holding terminal doctoral degrees. The review team also recognizes the efforts of the faculty in advancing their education for the advancement of the program as several are currently enrolled in doctoral programs. The program faculty are provided mentorship and guidance from the department chair, program directors, as well as each other. The review team recognizes the strong relationships that have developed among the faculty within the Athletic Therapy Program. The review team commends the faculty on the significant achievements and professional advancements.

**Areas for Improvement:** The program faculty have expressed difficulty in acquiring more diverse faculty as in their recent faculty searches. Currently the program has gender diversity but lacks ethnic or racial diversity. As a new program, there has not been an opportunity for a formal review of faculty. However, the program has already begun to create a faculty review process that will be implemented.

**Recommendations:** Diversity has been described as an area for improvement. However, the review team does not identify the need for diversity as a result of the program faculty's actions. The only recommendation in regards to diversity is to continue to consider it with future hires. The review team encourages the program to continue the implementation of the faculty review.

### **Standard F. Program Support**

- A. The number and capabilities of the support staff are adequate to meet the mission and objectives of the program.
- B. Administrative support is present in assisting in the selection and development of support staff.
- C. The facilities, equipment, and library support needs are adequate to meet the mission and goals of the program.

**Strengths:** Currently the program has one administrative specialist II who currently meets the needs of the program. The administrative specialist has and continues to attend trainings related

to university software and processes as well as receiving mentorship from other college staff. The current staff member is also training to assist with academic advising in order to meet the programs goals in regards to advising.

The Athletic Therapy program is housed in the Swenson Building within the Stromberg Complex, where it is provided with adequate space and equipment. Faculty have written and received grant funding for needed specialized equipment for the improvement of teaching and research.

The Athletic Therapy program utilizes the resources provided by the Stewart Library including databases, audiovisual materials, Anatomy TV and librarian services and finds it to adequately meet the needs of the program.

**Areas for Improvement:** The review team discussed and could not identify any significant areas for improvement regarding the programs support.

**Recommendations:** N/A

### **Standard G. Relationships with External Communities**

- A. If there are formal relationships between the program and external communities of interest they should be clearly defined.
- B. Such relationships should have a clearly defined role and evidence of their contribution to the program (curriculum, equipment, faculty, budget, etc.) should be demonstrated.
- C. If the program has an external advisory committee, it should meet regularly and minutes of the meetings be made available.

**Strengths:** The faculty have spent the last 10 years developing relationships with a variety of off campus clinical facilities in order to provide students internship opportunities that align with a specific graduate program discipline. The diverse clinical affiliations have provided students with a variety of professional skills and networking opportunities in disciplines such as outpatient rehabilitation, inpatient rehabilitation, athletic training at the collegiate level, athletic training at the high school level, family practice clinics, orthopedic clinics, etc. Students participate in 180-360 internship hours while in the program. The relationships with external healthcare professionals that have been built by the faculty within the Athletic Therapy program have provided a strong community engaged connection between WSU and the healthcare community.

**Areas for Improvement:** No improvements were noted as the program excels in community affiliations.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the Athletic Therapy program include some of their clinical affiliates with the implementation of the programs advisory board described in the strategic plan. It has been suggested that the Athletic Therapy Advisory Board will meet annually. The review committee sees potential advantages to having practicing healthcare professionals as advisory board members in order to provide insight on current professional trends.

### **Standard H. Program Summary**

- A. The program must show how it has implemented any recommendations from the previous review and what effect these changes had on the program. If any recommendations were not implemented the program should explain why they were not put into place.

**Strengths:** The review team has found that the Athletic Therapy Program accepted the advice from the previous program review and has taken action to fulfill the requests noted in the previous review. The need for additional fulltime faculty in lieu of the heavy dependence on adjunct faculty has been fulfilled by the hiring of a fifth fulltime faculty member. As noted previously in Standard D, advising has improved with the incorporation of the DCHP academic advisement office, Program Director involvement, and training of the new staff member. The implementation of increased advisement resources as well as the strategic plan constructed by the program has fulfilled any previous concerns associated with advisement. The previous review acknowledged concern dealing with communication regarding pre-requisite courses. The current review team recognizes this issue as well. However, it is understood that this may be a difficult task, as the required courses will vary depending on the graduate program the student chooses, with additional variations with each graduate institution. The program director has met with the college academic advisor to research ways to improve this process. It was determined that students would be referred to specific advisors throughout the university such as the pre-PA advisor and pre-med advisor in order to better define the course of study required. The program director will assist pre-occupational therapy and pre-physical therapy students to access online material pertaining to specific institutional requirements. The need for a laboratory coordinator has been met with the implementation of a fulltime laboratory instructor. The Athletic Therapy program faculty and the previous review team have identified confusion with the current name of Athletic Therapy. The faculty has planned a name change to Rehabilitation Sciences that will be submitted Fall of 2020. This will alleviate the current confusion with Athletic Training and acknowledge the programs variety of disciplines.

**Areas for Improvement:** As stated previously, the need for an external review committee or advisory committee is suggested in order for the program to meet current and future employment needs and demands.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the program establish an advisory committee comprised of working professionals employed in the various disciplines that the athletic therapy program serves. This will give the program professional insight as well as additional community support for clinical internships.

The review committee acknowledges the need for an added skill set that will provide employment upon completion of the Bachelor Degree. We also recognize and commend the program faculty for their efforts to research skillsets that will fulfill the need for more employable skills. It is recommended that the program continue to explore options that will fulfill this request.