

Bachelor of Science in Athletic Therapy Program
Program Faculty Response to Site Visit Report

Commendations:

The Bachelor of Science in Athletic Therapy Program faculty appreciates the efforts of the Review Team to evaluate the program. The team identified several strengths of the program including a clearly outlined mission statement, a well-thought-out curriculum that provides a solid foundation for pre-professional undergraduate students, clearly described learning outcomes that align with the curriculum, improvements to academic advising that benefit both the students and college advisement office, the quality and cohesiveness of the full-time and adjunct faculty, the facilities, technology, and equipment in the classrooms, and the relationships that have been developed with various clinical facilities within the Wasatch front. We believe that the team's findings will serve to further strengthen the Athletic Therapy program in the years ahead

Recommendations:

1. Standard B. Curriculum: Streamline the curriculum to facilitate graduation efficiency, and provide more employment opportunities with a Bachelor's degree
 - a. Since our last program review in 2014, there have been a few course revisions and additions to the Athletic Therapy curriculum. However, the faculty agree that the curriculum is in need of major revision to better accommodate the brand of student declaring Athletic Therapy as their major. The Athletic Therapy major appeals to students who are planning to attend graduate school in fields such as physical therapy, athletic training, occupational therapy, physician assistant, and medicine. However, the program's current curriculum is somewhat rigid and does not always accommodate the pre-requisite coursework that is required for many these graduate programs. Secondly, the lack of a standardized admission timeline has created confusion for students when developing their degree plans. Lastly, the faculty also agrees with the site team in regard to the lack of employment opportunities available to students after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Athletic Therapy. This program is designed for a student to immediately transition to graduate school after graduation. Little thought was given to imbedding certifications within the curriculum that would facilitate employment opportunities for students after graduation.
 - b. Program proposals to revise the Athletic Therapy curriculum will be submitted to the college and university curriculum committees this Fall. In addition to revising courses that were originally tailored to athletic training students, we would also like to revise the overall curriculum in the Athletic Therapy program so that it is more inclusive to students who are interested pursuing other health care professions. Secondly, we would like to better standardize the application process for students who are interested in the Athletic Therapy Program. Currently, students are admitted to the Athletic Therapy Program on a rolling basis. This not only is difficult for students to know when they are eligible to apply to the program, but it is also difficult for the program director to supervise these students. The College of Health Professions Academic Advisors have recommended that we meet with the faculty in the Health Sciences (AS) program

to develop an Athletic Therapy track for students to obtain their Associate's degree prior to applying and being admitted to the Athletic Therapy (BS) program. Lastly, the name, Athletic Therapy, has been confusing and sometimes misleading to students and colleagues at WSU. We would like to revise the name to "Rehabilitation Sciences" so that it better aligns with the mission of the program. Our goal is for these revisions to be approved and implemented in the 2021-2022 catalog. During the 2019-20 academic year, we attempted to partner with a local massage therapist to offer a Licensed Massage Therapy (LMT) route for students within the Athletic Therapy program. However, due to certain accreditation laws, the ability to integrate an LMT route in a timeline that would be both convenient and logical for students in our program was determined to not be possible. However, we are currently looking to offer alternative certifications that are more accessible for students at Weber State University. Both the Phlebotomy certification and Limited Practical Technician (LPT) certification have potential to either be integrated or advertised to students in the Athletic Therapy program. Once the program revisions are submitted and approved this Fall, the faculty will continue exploring these (and other) certifications that have potential to be added to the program.

- c. We will rely on the biennial assessments and our next program review to determine the effectiveness of these revisions to the Athletic Therapy curriculum in terms of the academic outcomes and graduation efficiency of our students. We will also review future alumni surveys to determine if additional certifications would make graduates more marketable to graduate programs and/or employers.
2. Standard C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments: Distribute an assessment survey every semester be tailored in a way that asks specific questions regarding the student's status within the program.
 - a. We currently have a graduate exit survey that we distribute towards the end of each semester to students who have applied for graduation. This survey is used to assess students' post-graduate plans, graduate school acceptance rate, and perception of how well they believe the Athletic Therapy program prepared them for graduate school. Additionally, it asks for student feedback on what can be improved about the program. We have also created an alumni survey that we will be distributing to former graduates to track their education and/or employment statuses, which will offer information on graduate success of the Athletic Therapy program. We do see the benefit of creating another survey for current students with the Athletic Therapy major and/or program. It could provide contemporary feedback from students about their current perception of the program and revised curriculum. However, the feasibility and logistics of this survey requires further discussion. The application and graduation timeline of students in our current program is highly variable, which makes the timing and frequency of when this survey should be distributed difficult to determine.
 - b. Once the revised Athletic Therapy program curriculum is officially implemented in the 2021-22 catalog, the faculty will meet during the early Fall 2021 semester to discuss the feasibility and logistics over creating and distributing an assessment

survey to current students in the program/major. We believe that more streamlined curriculum is better suited for a survey of this kind.

- c. A decision regarding the implementation of an assessment survey for current students will be noted in the Fall 2021 biennial assessment. If the faculty decided to create and distribute this students to student during the Fall 2021 semester, the results of this survey will be summarized in subsequent biennial assessments and program reviews.
3. Standard E. Faculty: Continue to consider expanding the ethical and racial diversity of the faculty with future hires.
 - a. We agree with the site visit team, and believe that there is room to grow the diversity of faculty within the program. We currently have 60% women and 40% men among the full-time faculty, but all are Caucasian. A more diverse faculty will foster more perspective and understanding within the program, and welcome more diverse students. Exposing our students to more diversity within our program will make for more well-rounded students who are better prepared for life after graduation. The AT faculty have made substantial efforts in the last three faculty searches to recruit diverse faculty. However, the number of diverse applicants has typically been limited to one applicant per search.
 - b. We have remained committed to diversifying the AT faculty as openings occur. We have not had the opportunity to hire additional faculty since the beginning of this review, but we did hire a new Administrative Specialist this Fall who is Hispanic. In every faculty search, we award the maximum number of points allowable for diversity, and will continue to do so.
 - c. The diversity of faculty in our Athletic Therapy program will be reported in our self-study during future program reviews.
 4. Standard G. Relationships with External Committees: Include clinical affiliates with the implementation of a program advisory board.
 - a. We agree and acknowledge the importance of having a dedicated advisory board committee dedicated to the Athletic Therapy program. It is logical for this committee to be comprised of clinical affiliates who we have established connections with over the past decade. This committee will be able to provide the faculty with unbiased opinions about the program, and provide recommendations as to how the program can be improved. Many of our clinical affiliates are employers of are alumni. Therefore, they can offer unique insight as to how our program can be improved to make our graduates more marketable to employers.
 - b. The chair of our department has tasked the program director this Fall with developing an Athletic Therapy program advisory board committee. The program director will gather recommendations from the other faculty to determine which clinical affiliates should be targeted during recruitment. The goal is to hold the inaugural advisory board meeting virtually during the Spring 2021 semester.
 - c. Meeting minutes will be recorded during the inaugural Athletic Therapy advisory board meeting. These minutes will be summarized in either the Spring 2021 or Fall 2021 biennial assessment depending on when the meeting is held.

Department/program plans beyond Program Review Team recommendations

1. Academic advising: Without having an academic advisor in our department, all of the advising responsibility for students within the Athletic Therapy program is placed on the program director. Therefore, we would like to hire at least a part-time staff to serve as our department's academic advisor, who could at least share the advising responsibilities with the program director. We have had recent discussions with the dean of the college about likelihood of adding an academic advisor to our department, and from these discussions, we are hopeful that we will have a position of this kind in the near future.
2. Interdepartmental collaboration: Although we are content with the classroom and office space that are afforded to the Athletic Therapy program, as a new department to the college, we would like to further establish the Athletic Therapy program among our interdepartmental colleagues. This starts with collaborating with faculty in other departments to develop shared lab spaces and interprofessional education courses. Our long-term goal is to relocate our department to be physically closer to other departments within the college. This move would likely require a new building to be built on campus due to the college's main buildings being at maximum capacity currently.