

MSAT - Program Review  
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**Introduction:**

The Masters of Science of Athletic Training program is a nationally recognized graduate program with a rigorous curriculum, competitive and prestigious clinical rotations, and highly qualified faculty. Faculty are highly engaged in creating a learning experience for students to accomplish their didactic and clinical student learning outcomes. The program recognizes the importance of maintaining close relationships with clinical partnerships, has community and university support, and a mission statement that is aligned with the university and outlines their program goals.

We appreciate the opportunity to review a program with high standards and appreciate the time and effort the program put forth for this successful review process.

**Standard A - Mission Statement**

Summary: The mission statement was updated in the last year. It demonstrates a student-centered curriculum that aligns with the College of Health Professions and University mission statements.

**MSAT Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Weber State University Master of Science in Athletic Training Program is to provide a quality educational and research experience for students. Graduate students are presented with didactic and psychomotor experiences that will lead them to being able to exercise sound ethical judgment, achieve satisfying careers, and make positive contributions to their communities. In addition, the MSAT guides the student on the journey to become a lifelong learner through obligatory professional continuing education.

**Dumke College of Health Professions Mission Statement:**

The Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions (DCHP) will be the premier healthcare college for our students, faculty, staff and community by meeting their evolving needs through traditional and innovative methods within healthcare. The Dumke College of Health Professions provides excellence in education for our students, support for our faculty and staff, resources for our healthcare partners and partnerships with our local and global communities.

**Weber State University Mission Statement:**

"Weber State University provides associate, baccalaureate and master's degree programs in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields. Encouraging freedom of expression and

valuing diversity, the university provides excellent educational experiences for students through extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom. Through academic programs, research, artistic expression, public service and community-based learning, the university serves as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region.”

Strength:

The mission statement is student-focused and expresses high-level expected student outcomes such as educational quality, focus on graduate research, meaningful clinical experiences, and creating positive community relationships. The mission statement coincides with the DCHP and University mission statements in providing quality education and facilitating community outreach.

Recommendation(s):

As per average mission statement lengths, it is long. There are goals expressed that may be difficult to measure (i.e. ethical judgment, achieve satisfying careers, and make positive contributions to their communities, lifelong learning). A mission statement should be focused on deliverables within the program, and not post-graduate experiences (i.e., job satisfaction, lifelong learning).

### **Standard B - Curriculum**

Summary: The curriculum was recently updated to meet the CAATE requirements for immersive clinical experiences for the students. The immersive requirement is being met in the spring (4-week experience) but an additional 6-week immersion is provided in the fall.

Curriculum development closely follows standards from the accrediting body, CAATE, which guides students to a successful, holistic AT education, adequately preparing students for board exams. The MSAT board of certification (BOC) first-time pass rates are at 91 percent. The national average of MSAT BOC first-time pass rate is reported at 84 percent. This is an attestation to the design and rigor of their curriculum and the quality of the instruction. Faculty members all have input to the curriculum and teach in their areas of expertise.

Strength: This is one of the few professional athletic training master's programs that requires a master's thesis for graduation. For students who may choose to continue with their doctorate, this is a unique opportunity, preparing them for future educational pathways.

Recommendation: Preceptors routinely provide student feedback, both formally written and informally to the students while at their sites. When speaking with preceptors they reported a lack of routine feedback from the program on their performance with students. This could be in the form of verbal discussion with the Coordinator of Clinical Education when she visits the site and/or written feedback the students provide at the end of their clinical rotations. This would benefit the program by helping the preceptors to better understand how they are doing in their position, as well as help them improve in areas they may not realize they are lacking.

### **Standard C - Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment**

Summary: There are five Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) in the program. The SLOs are based on the five domains of athletic training. Each SLO is measured by both direct and indirect tools that are throughout the courses, with a requirement of at least one direct method of assessment per objective. The assessment plan includes benchmarking, findings, and action plans for both met and unmet outcomes. The outcomes are clearly defined by the MSAT program and are met through the curriculum. The CAATE-required assessments are all publicly available on the MSAT website.

Strength: The SLOs are clearly articulated to align with the five domains of athletic training. This is a blueprint for entry-level athletic trainers and what the curriculum should be built upon. Additionally, the assessment plan is well-designed with ongoing review and improvement built into the plan. Faculty are engaged in the process of creating the curriculum and are therefore an active part of meeting the SLOs.

Recommendation(s): It is suggested that the faculty retreats continue so all faculty can continue to have input into the curriculum SLOs and assessment. This provides cohesiveness of the faculty and will provide the program impetus for change, as necessary, for continued excellence demonstrated on the BOC exam by the students.

#### **Standard D - Academic Advising**

Summary: The MSAT program offers a clear strategy for academic and career advising. Most of the student advising is completed by the Program Director, Matthew Donahue. All MSAT students are met with on an individual basis, in person, with the program director in the first semester of the program. There are times the Department Chair, Valerie Herzog and/or Coordinator of Clinical Education, Alysia Cohen may provide specific advising, dependent on student need. Due to the students moving through the program by cohort, the program reports advising being fairly simple and may require an occasional discussion with students on completion of pre-requisites or additional support courses.

Strength: The size of the cohort and release time of the program director seems adequate for academic advising responsibilities. There are specific courses in the program of study that help facilitate resume building and clinical exposure for student's potential employment opportunities.

Recommendation: Based on communication with students, it may be helpful to communicate how the program advises students through the program of study with regards to coursework performance and successful progression in the program. Also, there is no mention of how the program director documents advising; the program should be encouraged to use the university platforms in CatTracks for consistency and transparency with students.

#### **Standard E - Faculty**

Summary: The MSAT program has four full-time, tenure track faculty, and one full-time instructor. The four full-time faculty have all earned their Ph.D. in respective disciplines helping validate the MSAT learning objectives and curriculum standards. Many faculty members teach

overload to support MSAT FTE and instruction demand. Faculty are student-centered in their curriculum development. Faculty members are certified Athletic Trainers. Faculty are active members of professional organizations such as the National Athletic Trainers' Association, the American College of Sports Medicine, and attend the Athletic Training Educators' Conference annually. Faculty feel supported both professionally, and personally. Faculty have expressed they have been prepared for the tenure process. The following [link](#) provides details on the faculty in the MSAT program.

Strength: All faculty have demonstrated commitment to the MSAT program, as well as the college. Words used to describe the faculty by those interviewed include "great communication," "easy to work with," "knowledgeable," "camaraderie," "accommodating," and "students are always put first." There is obvious respect for the program and the faculty from all constituents.

Recommendation(s): If the desire of the program is to grow in numbers, there will be need for another faculty line to help support at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This is demonstrated by most faculty members already teaching overload to meet the needs of the program.

### **Standard F - Program Support**

Summary: The MSAT program was previously housed in the College of Education but moved to the College of Health Professions in the last year. The move was embraced by the new college and the MSAT program has received support. There seems to be great communication between the Dean, Yasmen Simonian, Associate Dean, Ken Johnson, and Department Chair, Valerie Herzog, as well as with the Program Director, Matthew Donohue. The MSAT program has one  $\frac{3}{4}$  time staff, who is the administrative assistant. She has only been on staff for one month and reports being supported and has ongoing communication (at least two times a month) with the Department Chair, to whom she reports.

#### **Strengths:**

Preceptor locations and clinical rotation sites expressed kinship and a comfortable relationship with the MSAT program. Adjunct faculty/preceptors expressed their ability to readily contact faculty with questions and/or concerns with students or curriculum material. Preceptors feel they are well supported and informed with knowing student competencies have an influence on students' obtaining objectives, outlines, and tasks necessary to enhance student learning and prepare students for the board of certification.

The facilities available to the students are high caliber. There are two classrooms with areas for both didactic and clinical learning. Additionally, there is a biomechanics and a bionutrition lab that is used by the faculty and students for learning and research. The equipment available to the students is more than adequate to meet the needs of students in athletic training; including a SwimEx facility, which is lacking in most athletic training facilities in athletics. iPads are supplied for students to check-out as needed. The MSAT program has purchased lasers and a diagnostic ultrasound through grants and some course fees. Again, these are pieces of equipment that most athletic training students would not see until they are working in the field.

Recommendation(s): Dean Simonian described the desire to get a 100% administrative position to also provide help with advising students. Upon speaking to the faculty, this should be a priority. The  $\frac{3}{4}$  position they currently have is not consistent because it is filled by a student. By having a full-time dedicated position, there would be several areas this person could help with, including: a) Admissions help with the increased number of international students in the program; b) Advising for the Athletic Therapy program; c) Recruitment for both the undergraduate and graduate programs; and d) Enrollment management for the graduate program.

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

Summary: The MSAT program has several types of external communities: clinical sites, an advisory board, and outreach programs. Each provides a different opportunity for the student's benefit, whether it be networking, reaching career goals, or reaching personal goals. These communities have become an integral part of the MSAT program and provide different experiences beyond the didactic portion of the program. We recognize there are accreditation requirements for maintaining a list of clinical relationships. However, as a review committee, we failed to ask for the list of clinical sites.

Strength: There are three external communities with which a relationship has been well-established. The MSAT program's medical director is from Intermountain Healthcare. Many community outreach events are hosted by Intermountain Healthcare and as such, students are able to volunteer with these events. WMI Global is another group that hosts event coverage beyond the local community. Because of the relationship with the MSAT program, it often asks for volunteers/help from current students and alumni of the program. The strongest relationship is with WSU's athletic department which can only occur with incredible communication and support from both sides.

Recommendation(s): Since immersions are a CAATE Standard, making sure the students are aware of the resources available through the NATA for seeking immersive sights will provide extra opportunities for the students. For future reviews, we recommend a list of clinical sites be included in the review documents.

### **Standard H - Program Summary**

Summary: The Master of Science in Athletic Training program at WSU successfully prepares its students for career paths. The number of faculty members who are hired to teach and administer the program is adequate to meet program requirements and student learning outcomes.

Strengths: The MSAT program has a 100% pass rate on the national exam. The chair and program director have a very good understanding of their students and the job market. Knowing most of their students want to stay in Utah, the number of students in the program will not saturate the job market.

It is evident that this is a student-centered program. This was demonstrated by what students, faculty, staff, community partners, and administration all noted about the programmatic culture during our programmatic review.

Recommendation(s): See recommendations in all Standards.