

## REVIEW OF THE B.S. IN ATHLETIC TRAINING

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: 51.0913  
Athletic Training/Trainer

### OVERVIEW

The B.S. in Athletic Training program at Illinois State University is housed in the School of Kinesiology and Recreation within the College of Applied Science and Technology. The school also offers undergraduate minors in Athletic Coaching, Exercise Science, and Recreation and Park Administration; a B.S. in Exercise Science; a B.S., B.S.Ed. in Physical Education; a B.S. in Recreation and Park Administration; and an M.S. in Kinesiology and Recreation with eight sequences. The last review of the B.S. in Athletic Training program occurred in 2011-2012.

The B.S. in Athletic Training program is designed to qualify its graduates to take the national Board of Certification examination, passage of which is required to obtain the Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) credential. Obtaining the undergraduate degree and the ATC credential is required for licensure to practice as an athletic trainer in Illinois.

This is the last program review for the B.S. in Athletic Training program. The consortium of organizations governing the athletic training profession nationally is transitioning the gateway degree for the profession from the bachelor's degree to the master's degree. Accordingly, the School of Kinesiology and Recreation has proposed establishment of a Master of Athletic Training program and disestablishment of the B.S. in Athletic Training program. The Master of Athletic Training proposal was approved by the Academic Senate of Illinois State University on November 28, 2018. On February 22, 2019, the Board of Trustees of the University authorized an application to the Illinois Board of Higher Education for authority to offer the Master of Athletic Training degree. That application is currently scheduled for review by the IBHE board at its August 6, 2019 meeting. A proposal to disestablish the B.S. in Athletic Training program was approved by the Academic Senate on April 5, 2019. The School of Kinesiology and Recreation has adopted a plan for helping students remaining in that program to complete it and take the national certification examination before the gateway degree transition has been completed nationally.

One of the eight sequences in the M.S. in Kinesiology and Recreation program is athletic training. That plan of study differs from the plan of study of the B.S. in Athletic Training program in that the former is intended to provide advanced training to licensed athletic trainers. The athletic training sequence will be retained after establishment of the Master of Athletic Training program to continue to serve those already licensed to practice in the field.

#### Enrollment and Degrees Conferred, 2011-2018

##### B.S. in Athletic Training, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Enrollment, fall census day	122	129	149	138	174	196	184	145
Degrees conferred, graduating fiscal year	23	24	18	27	23	30	23	28

Table note:

Graduating Fiscal Year consists of summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order. For example, Graduating Fiscal Year 2018 consists of the following terms: summer 2017, fall 2017, and spring 2018.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT**

### **Program goals**

- To develop graduates who possess entry-level knowledge and skills in the prevention, recognition, treatment, and rehabilitation of athletic injuries while emphasizing integrated learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and professionalism.
- To prepare graduates to successfully challenge the Board of Certification exam and become certified athletic trainers who foster excellence, either by entering the work force or continuing educational pursuits in seeking an advanced degree.

### **Students learning outcomes**

Upon completion of the B.S. in Athletic Training degree, the athletic training student will ...

- Understand evidence-based practice concepts and their application.
- Possess the ability to develop and implement strategies and programs to prevent the incidence and/or severity of injuries and illnesses, optimizing patient overall health and quality of life.
- Possess strong clinical examination and reasoning skills, based on an understanding of anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics that will enable the athletic trainer to accurately formulate a differential diagnosis.
- Be knowledgeable and skilled in the evaluation and immediate management of acute illnesses and injuries.
- Be knowledgeable and skilled in the development and implementation of therapeutic interventions designed to maximize a patient's participation and health-related quality of life.
- Recognize abnormal social, emotional, and mental behaviors in their patients and possess the ability to intervene and refer these individuals as necessary.
- Understand risk management, health care delivery mechanisms, insurance, reimbursement, documentation, patient privacy, and facility management.
- Embrace the need to practice within the limits of state and national regulation using moral and ethical judgment, while working collaboratively with other health care providers, referring patients appropriately when such referral is warranted.

### **Program curriculum** (2018-2019)

Graduation requirements:

120 credit hours consisting of 15 credit hours in foundational kinesiology and recreation courses, 34 credit hours in athletic training core courses, at least 5 credit hours of professional practice, 6 credit hours of interdisciplinary courses in family and consumer sciences and health sciences, 39 credit hours of General Education courses, and electives needed to complete the 120 credit hours.

### **Program delivery**

The program is offered on the Normal campus.

The program is delivered primarily through face-to-face or blended face-to-face/online instruction.

The School of Kinesiology and Recreation sponsors short-term cultural immersion experiences in Costa Rica, Poland, and Russia.

### **School faculty** (Fall 2018)

24 tenure track faculty members (7 Professors, 8 Associate Professors, and 9 Assistant Professors)

17 non-tenure track faculty members (11 full-time and 6 part-time, totaling 13.99 FTE)

Undergraduate student to faculty ratio: 24.7 to 1

Undergraduate student to tenure-line faculty ratio: 38.1 to 1

Core faculty for the B.S. in Athletic Training program includes three tenure-line faculty members and one non-tenure track faculty member.

### **Specialized accreditation**

The B.S. in Athletic Training program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). That accreditation is necessary for graduates of the program to take the national Board of Certification examination and to apply for licensure in Illinois. CAATE last accredited the program in October 2012, and the program has remained in good standing with CAATE since then. With submission of the next request for re-accreditation, due July 1, 2022, the School of Kinesiology and Recreation will request transfer of the accreditation from the B.S. in Athletic Training program to the Master of Athletic Training program, if the latter program has been approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

### **Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand**

The most notable change to the athletic training profession since the 2011-2012 review of the B.S. in Athletic Training program is the mandate from the national accrediting body for the discipline (CAATE) to move the entry-level degree for the profession to the master's level. This change has come with mixed feelings for athletic training faculty at Illinois State. As program metrics have indicated, the B.S. in Athletic Training program has been very successful in preparing entry-level professionals in the field. At the same time, faculty recognizes the benefits to the profession and to the educational experiences of the students by moving the entry-level degree to the master's level. In early 2018, CAATE released its *Standards for Accreditation of Professional Athletic Training Programs* at the master's level. The new standards will become effective in July 2020 and will guide accreditation of the new master's-level gateway programs. Timing of the release has allowed athletic training faculty in the School of Kinesiology and Recreation to begin planning implementation of the standards through the Master of Athletic Training program, which faculty has proposed to replace the B.S. in Athletic Training program (at this writing, approval of the Master of Athletic Training program is pending approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education). Faculty members are excited to critically evaluate the undergraduate athletic training program and to incorporate findings of that evaluation with strategies used in the post-professional athletic training sequence of the M.S. in Kinesiology and Recreation program to design the new master's program. It is unclear how moving the gateway degree to the master's level will affect student demand for athletic training instruction offered by Illinois State. Faculty is optimistic that the reputation Illinois State has earned through its undergraduate athletic training program will attract Master of Athletic Training program cohorts enrolling between 25 and 30 students.

### **Responses to previous program review recommendations**

In response to previous program review recommendations, athletic training program faculty members have successfully undertaken several significant initiatives with respect to the B.S. in Athletic Training program. Faculty completed a comprehensive program self-study preparatory to a request to CAATE for continuing accreditation of the program. The request resulted in continuing accreditation of the program in 2012 for the maximum term granted by CAATE (10 years). Faculty has since continued to monitor the program for its compliance with accreditation standards as those standards have been revised by CAATE. As enrollment in the B.S. in Athletic Training program has increased, additional clinical sites have been needed to accommodate the additional students. Faculty members have arranged four additional clinical sites for the fall and spring semesters and four additional clinical sites for summer internships. Efforts have been made by the school to increase support for faculty professional development, especially for pre-tenured faculty. The school has supported faculty research through equipment purchases and travel awards for conference participation. The school also has made it possible for at least one faculty member to attend the CAATE accreditation conference each of the last three years. A major student-oriented program emphasis since the prior program review has been increasing involvement of students in research outside the classroom. Faculty members have encouraged undergraduate athletic training students to help them with their research. Numerous undergraduate students participating in the Honors program have developed and conducted their own research. In several instances, faculty and/or students have disseminated their research findings through professional presentations or publications.

### **Major findings**

This program review highlights the critical juncture for athletic training education across the United States. Since the last program review, the B.S. in Athletic Training program at Illinois State University has positioned itself as a premier preparer of athletic trainers in the Midwest and beyond. With the impending transition of the gateway degree for the profession to the master's level, the School of Kinesiology and Recreation will need to examine strategies for recruiting talented students to its new Master of Athletic Training program. More specifically, the school needs to identify and develop relations with other undergraduate programs at the University and at other institutions as preparers of students for enrollment in the Master of Athletic Training program. One local example includes the newly-developed Health Promotion and Fitness Management program at Illinois Wesleyan University. By collaborating with institutions that do not have or seek to have a master's-level professional athletic training program, the School of Kinesiology and Recreation can selectively recruit students who are prepared to succeed in its new master's program. Finally, while the process of transitioning the gateway degree to the master's level will not be without challenges, this mandate has allowed athletic training faculty to critically examine how they can best imbue students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to succeed in the athletic training profession.

### **Initiatives and plans**

- Complete the new graduate program proposal process.
- Successfully apply to the IBHE for a new professional athletic training program.
- Identify potential feeder programs on campus and throughout the state and region to examine possible collaborations.
- Fully implement the 2020 *Standards for Accreditation of Professional Athletic Training Programs* into the Master of Athletic Training program at Illinois State University.
- Prepare for and execute a successful self-study and site visit for continuation of accreditation at the master's level.
- Increase opportunities for the dissemination of graduate student research at state, district, and national conferences.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Review Outcome.** The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.S. in Athletic Training program to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee recognizes this review of the B.S. in Athletic Training program as the last for the program before its disestablishment. At this writing, a proposal by the School of Kinesiology and Recreation to replace the program with a new Master of Athletic Training program is pending approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). Prompting the change is a change in the athletic training profession nationally to require a master's degree in athletic training rather than a bachelor's degree to qualify for certification and licensure to practice in the field.

The committee thanks faculty of the B.S. in Athletic Training program for a concise program review report that critically assesses strengths and weaknesses of the program to inform development of the replacement Master of Athletic Training program. The committee commends faculty for its efforts to prepare the self-study report, particularly in light of concurrent efforts needed on the part of faculty to design the new program. The transition from an undergraduate athletic training degree to a master's degree has involved preparing applications for approval by internal curriculum committees, by the Board of Trustees of the University, and by IBHE. The transition has also involved work by athletic training faculty members with their colleagues in the B.S. in Exercise Science program to develop a new allied health professions sequence in that program. The new sequence is intended to enroll students working toward acceptance to the new Master of Athletic Training program or to other master's level programs designed to prepare students for certification and licensure in allied health fields including athletic training. The new sequence has been approved at all curricular levels and is expected to enroll its first students in fall 2019.

The committee congratulates faculty for maintaining the B.S. in Athletic Training program in good standing with the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), the specialized accreditation association in

the field. In September 2013 CAATE awarded the program continuing accreditation for up to 10 years. Faculty has maintained that accreditation in good standing since then. As a result, obtaining accreditation for the new Master of Athletic Training program, which is essential for its graduates to qualify for certification and licensure, will involve a request to transfer CAATE accreditation from the B.S. in Athletic Training program to the Master of Athletic Training program rather than submission of a voluminous application for initial accreditation.

The committee recognizes faculty and staff members for their efforts since the prior program review to recruit students to the B.S. in Athletic Training program and for accommodating enrollment increases resulting from those efforts. Enrollment has increased from 122 students (fall 2011) to 184 students (fall 2017). Since the prior review, the program has remained the largest undergraduate athletic training program in the state with respect to both enrollment and degrees conferred. The committee also recognizes faculty and staff for their successful efforts to increase diversity among students in the program with respect to race/ethnicity. The percentage of students in the program self-identifying with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented in the discipline increased from 21.7 percent in fall 2014 to 31.0 percent in fall 2017. The program has maintained a gender balance of approximately 55 percent women and 45 percent men. All program faculty members have received training in working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) members of the university community.

The committee commends faculty and staff members for their efforts to graduate students within four years of their enrollment in the program and for successfully preparing students for certification and licensure. Of students completing the program in Fiscal 2016, 100 percent graduated within four years compared to 63.9 percent across all undergraduate programs at the University. In Fiscal 2017, 83.3 percent of athletic training program graduates completed in four years compared to 67.3 percent university-wide. All CAATE-accredited athletic training programs are required to annually report to CAATE the three-year aggregate first-time pass rate for graduates taking the national certification examination. The most recent rate reported to CAATE by the School of Kinesiology and Recreation at Illinois State University is 96 percent, compared to 83 percent nationwide.

Critical to successes in preparing students for certification and licensure are the numerous clinical and practicum experiences available to students. The program of study includes 1,200 clock hours of supervised out-of-class clinical work (approximately 20 hours per week), through which students practice under the supervision of a preceptor. Students also complete a summer internship. Due to program enrollment increases, additional clinical opportunities have been needed to accommodate all students. Faculty and staff members have responded to the need by arranging new sites for out-of-class clinical work and for internships, among them Athletico Physical Therapy, Ivy Rehab, the Peoria Rivermen hockey club, McLean County Orthopedics, Hopedale Medical Complex, Carle Sports Medicine, USA Volleyball, and the Indianapolis Colts football organization. Having the additional sites will provide students entering the new Master of Athletic Training program with clinical options they would not otherwise have had. The committee also recognizes faculty and staff members for their contributions to the Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Therapy (SMART) Clinic at the University, which provides on-campus clinical opportunities for athletic training students.

**Recommendations.** The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty members of the B.S. in Athletic Training program for the opportunity to provide input regarding athletic training instruction at Illinois State University through consideration of the self-study report submitted by faculty. The following committee recommendations are provided in a spirit of collaboration with Athletic Training faculty members as they plan and implement the transition in professional athletic training education at Illinois State from the undergraduate level to the graduate level.

**Implement the plan for mentoring students still enrolled in the program.** Critical to disestablishing any academic program are efforts to honor the responsibility the institution has to students still enrolled in the program by helping them complete the degree. Making good on this responsibility is especially important for students in the B.S. in Athletic Training program, as beyond 2022-2023 a bachelor's degree in the field will no longer suffice for certification and licensure to practice. The committee recognizes faculty for its commitment to students remaining in the program through development of a teach-out plan. The committee encourages vigilance on the part of faculty with regard to implementation of the plan and timely graduation of all students eligible to do so.

**Collaborate with undergraduate programs to prepare students for the Master of Athletic Training program.**

Continued success at Illinois State in preparing students for athletic training careers will depend greatly on the ability of the School of Kinesiology and Recreation to recruit students with appropriate undergraduate credentials to the new Master of Athletic Training program. The committee concurs with faculty plans to identify and collaborate with undergraduate programs throughout the state and region that prepare students for graduate-level education in athletic training. Among such programs are the new allied health professions sequence of the B.S. in Exercise Science program in the School of Kinesiology and Recreation and the new Health Promotion and Fitness Management program at Illinois Wesleyan University. A critical aspect of those collaborations will be working with faculty at other institutions to identify their undergraduate courses that meet pre-requisite requirements of the new Master of Athletic Training program.

**Seek financial assistance to support students enrolling in the Master of Athletic Training program.** Another challenge facing athletic training faculty as it transitions to the new Master of Athletic Training program is finding sources of financial aid for students unable to pursue the degree without financial assistance. The challenge is made that much more difficult because students entering the Master of Athletic Training program will not already be eligible to work as athletic trainers while in the program, as is the case with students enrolling in the existing post-professional athletic training sequence of the M.S. in Kinesiology and Recreation program. The committee is concerned that the challenge of access to financial assistance may impede efforts on the part of faculty to recruit a diverse and academically well-prepared student population. The committee encourages athletic training faculty to work with the school, college, and Graduate School to seek solutions to this challenge.

**Increase faculty diversity.** The committee recognizes the School of Kinesiology and Recreation for the gender diversity among its full-time faculty members (59 percent women and 41 percent men in fall 2017). However, according to the program review self-study report, only one of the 35 full-time faculty members in the school self-identifies with a racial/ethnic group traditionally underrepresented in the discipline and field. The committee encourages athletic training faculty members to work with their faculty colleagues in the school to increase representation of persons of color on the faculty as faculty positions come open. The committee also recommends recruiting for diversity with respect to other identities and with respect to the expertise, interests, and perspectives faculty members bring to the school. One step in doing so might be for faculty to review and evaluate past efforts to recruit for diversity to identify recruitment strategies to continue and those to change. The newly-established Diversity and Inclusion Committee in the school could provide an appropriate venue for these efforts.

**Develop and implement a methodologically-sound student learning outcomes assessment plan for the Master of Athletic Training program.** The committee acknowledges work athletic training faculty has done since the prior program review to develop and implement a methodologically-sound student learning outcomes assessment plan for the B.S. in Athletic Training program and to utilize assessment findings to inform program evaluation and modification. The committee encourages faculty to draw on those experiences to develop and implement a methodologically-sound student learning outcomes assessment plan for the new Master of Athletic Training program. The committee recommends that faculty draw on findings obtained through implementation of the new plan to evaluate the program and identify the need for any program modifications. The committee recommends that faculty document any changes made to the program based on assessment findings and the rationale for those changes.

**Continue collaborating with Milner Library to provide research resources and information fluency instruction in support of the Master of Athletic Training program.** The committee recognizes ongoing collaborative efforts of School of Kinesiology and Recreation faculty and Milner Library faculty to assess and prioritize the kinesiology and recreation research collection maintained by the library, including periodical literature that supports the athletic training program. The committee encourages school and library faculty to continue its joint efforts to build and maintain a research collection that supports both professional and post-professional athletic training education at the graduate level. The committee also recognizes collaboration of school and library faculty in providing information fluency instruction to students in the school. The committee recommends a collaborative effort to develop a tiered approach to information fluency instruction in the new Master of Athletic Training program as faculty members finalize the curriculum, course content, and assessment plan.