

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO: AAC 18-22

COMMITTEE DATE: February 27, 2018

BOARD DATE: March 6, 2018

APPLICATION OF SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ATHLETIC TRAINING

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Salem State University** to award **the Master of Science in Athletic Training**

Upon graduating the first class for this program, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

March 2018

Salem State University Master of Science in Athletic Training

INTENT AND MISSION

Salem State University (SSU) plans that the proposed Master of Science in Athletic Training program (MSAT) will align with SSU's mission and strategic plan. SSU's current strategic plan includes the addition of at least five new master's degree programs. Specifically, the School of Graduate Studies' is advancing innovative graduate programs, providing comprehensive educational opportunities, increasing enrollment based on faculty and programmatic strengths and resources. The existing undergraduate athletic training program at SSU has achieved regional and national recognition positioning the proposed MSAT as an important asset.

The addition of the proposed MSAT is intended to be a specialized healthcare program that requires compliance with rigorous accreditation standards. The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) has increased its entry-level standards such that CAATE-accredited professional athletic training programs must result in the granting of a master's degree in athletic training. The timeline for compliance with the higher standard stipulates that baccalaureate programs may not admit, enroll, or matriculate students into an undergraduate athletic training program after the start of the fall term 2022. The bachelor level athletic training program at SSU, that has graduated many first-generation college students, has prepared graduates to be successful certified and licensed athletic trainers with expertise in prevention, evaluation, and diagnosis of injuries and illnesses, treatment and rehabilitation, and emergency care. The proposed MSAT presents a logical next step for SSU in continuing to prepare professionals for this field. SSU further intends to provide a clear pathway for the many students enrolled in traditional undergraduate athletic training programs across Massachusetts.

The purpose of the proposed MSAT program is to prepare students in the five domains of athletic training. These include injury and illness prevention, clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. CAATE requires 57 curricular content standards be met to provide detailed learning outcomes for which students must meet minimum clinical competency. It is intended that through course work and clinical experience, the proposed program will prepare students for a transition to autonomous clinical practice as certified and licensed athletic trainers.

The proposed program has obtained all necessary governance approvals on campus and was approved by the Salem State University, Board of Trustees on October 11, 2017. The required letter of intent was circulated on October 17, 2017. No comments were received.

NEED AND DEMAND

National and State Labor Market Outlook

SSU reports that as of 2016, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projected athletic training to experience a 21% job growth by 2022. The current undergraduate athletic training program is reported to have a 100% job placement in the North Shore region. SSU reports that even so the regional demand for licensed athletic trainers continues to be unmet. An increase in regulations associated with concussions and youth sports safety concerns has reportedly led to rapid growth in the need for more high school and college athletic trainers. SSU's reports an increase in Athletic Trainer positions posted each year, as well as an increase in salaries. The phase-out of bachelor level programs precipitated by CAATE is expected to create a greater need for MSAT Programs. The BLS projects 5,500 jobs in athletic training nationwide by 2024 with Massachusetts ranking in the top 12 states for number of athletic trainers employed. SSU expects that the dense population and advancements in medical services found in Massachusetts has led to and will continue to lead to strong job growth in employment of athletic trainers.

Student Demand

SSU reports that athletic training is a high demand field in the North Shore region, and it finds evidence of this via the approximately 100 current undergraduate students who are declared athletic training majors at SSU. At each open house event hosted on the SSU campus there are reportedly 15-20 interested prospective students. SSU finds this translates to an average enrollment of approximately 60 new athletic training undergraduate students each year. In addition, SSU has seen an increase in transfers to its undergraduate program, reportedly due to other institutions being put on academic probation by CAATE for failure to comply with the CAATE Board of Certification (BOC) exam first-time pass rate standard. SSU expects that the MSAT program will serve many of the undergraduate students moving on to complete a master's degree in the field. Additionally, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) and the SSU undergraduate athletic training program have focused on the recruitment and retention of a diverse student population.

Duplication

Bridgewater State University and Boston University offer MSAT programs in Massachusetts and have students currently enrolled.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

The existing bachelor's degree in athletic training will be transitioned to the proposed MSAT to facilitate continued operation of this successful, high-demand program and to meet the accreditation standards set by CAATE. The programs existing administrative and operational structure includes two program administrators. These positions include the program director and the coordinator of clinical education; both administrators also serve as full-time tenure track faculty members, and a third full-time tenure-track faculty member is dedicated to the program. Each of these three faculty positions is required by CAATE as the minimum required full-time

athletic training faculty. In addition, CAATE requires a full-time administrative assistant to meet this standard and to handle the daily operational demands of the program. The existing program is a major within the Sport and Movement Science (SMS) Department in the College of Arts and Sciences. The proposed MSAT leadership would report to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies once established.

ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS

Admission

SSU expects to require candidates to have a 3.0 overall GPA and a B- or better in undergraduate courses including Anatomy and Physiology I with Laboratory (4 credits), Anatomy and Physiology II with Laboratory (4 credits), Statistics or Equivalent Testing/Measurement course (3 credits), Exercise Physiology, Nutrition, Kinesiology or Biomechanics or Physics or Functional Anatomy (3-4 credits). In addition, candidates will be expected to submit three professional letters of recommendation, participate in a professional interview with the MSAT program faculty/staff, and provide a professional essay or other writing sample. SSU plans to ensure that admitted students also sign the declaration page of the student handbook, provide evidence of a physical exam and Hepatitis B vaccination, and current emergency cardiac care certification.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

Students	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New Full Time MSAT	16	17	18	19
Continuing Full Time MSAT	0	16	17	18
New Part Time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Continuing Part Time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Totals	16	33	35	37

Curriculum (Attachment A)

SSU plans that the proposed professional MSAT degree will consist of 60 credit hours of graduate course work completed over two years of full-time course work. The SSU Athletic Training program faculty, department chair, industry advisors and network of athletic training education colleagues helped developed the curriculum based on CAATE curricular content standards and CAATE educator conferences. Both the didactic and clinical experience requirements are designed to prepare graduate athletic training students with the knowledge and skills to transition to autonomous practice as a certified and licensed athletic trainer. SSU plans that the MSAT program will prepare students to be eligible to sit for the Board of Certification (BOC) Examination for Athletic Trainers. Once certification is obtained graduates will be eligible for state licensure.

Internships or Field Studies

Beginning in the 2nd semester of the proposed MSAT program it is planned that students will begin their clinical education experience, that is expected to continue during the summer following year one of the program, and during subsequent 3rd and 4th semesters of the program. CAATE requires accredited programs to meet operational standards for clinical education including a coordinator for clinical experiences. The existing undergraduate program has 13 active approved clinical sites in the North Shore and Greater Boston areas, including ones with Beverly High School, the Boston Celtics, Gordon College, Governor's Academy, Harvard University, Medford High School, North Shore Community Health, North Shore Physician Group, Salem State University athletics, and Tufts University. The program has the current capacity to place up to 24 students in clinical experiences each semester. It is planned that the proposed MSAT program will continue with these clinical placement sites, designed to provide direct clinical application of recently learned theoretical content.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

Fiscal (Attachment B)

Faculty and Administration (Attachment C)

SSU plans that the existing undergraduate program resources will remain in place for the proposed MSAT program. This includes the funding for CAATE membership, three full-time tenure track faculty members, one full-time program administrative assistant, and a 3-credit release per semester for both the program director and the coordinator of clinical education. As well, SSU plans that the existing funds allocated for the medical director position will continue as CAATE standards require.

In order to transition to the MSAT degree, one additional full-time tenure track faculty member will be needed to support graduate courses. An additional one-credit release per semester for the program director and coordinator of clinical education is expected. An annual stipend for medical doctors serving as clinical preceptors to MSAT students will be required. CAATE standards require programs to ensure students participate in a general medical clinical rotation under a licensed physician. The additional stipends would compensate the three physicians expected to serve as preceptors for the MSAT students in their general medical clinical rotation. In addition SSU anticipates that it will provide opportunities for faculty to present research at regional and national conferences.

Facilities, Library and Information Technologies

The current lab and classroom space as well as specialized inventory, located in two dedicated athletic training classrooms and laboratory rooms will continue to be utilized by the proposed program. SSU also expects to increase the sophistication of existing equipment and to supply budget resources to support the procurement of clinical examination and diagnostic simulation manikins to fulfill accreditation standards.

Plans to develop and implement a marketing plan targeting prospective students are also included in the program budget.

Affiliations and Partnerships

In November 2017 a formal transfer articulation agreement with North Shore Community College’s (NSCC) Physical Therapist Assistant program was developed such that students can transfer up to 66 credits into the existing SSU BS in Sport and Movement Science program with a concentration in Exercise Science. The Exercise Science concentration is designed to include the prerequisite course work for admission to graduate programs, including the proposed MSAT. In addition, students within this track are provided with individualized advising that is specific for admission to graduate programs.

Any undergraduate student can apply to the proposed MSAT program as early as their last year in an undergraduate program. Once the bachelor’s degree is conferred and all prerequisites and admissions criteria are met, students will formally be granted admissions to the proposed MSAT program. Once the program is approved, SSU expects to further develop relationships with regional institutions that offer qualifying undergraduate degree programs.

SSU cited a strong relationship with athletic trainers within the National Basketball Association that are planned for further development. SSU reports that two physical therapists, now athletic trainers with the Boston Celtics, attended Salem’s athletic training program, as did another now employed by the Oklahoma Thunder. SSU reports the development of a strategic relationship with the Northeastern University / Massachusetts General Hospital Sports Physical Therapy Fellowship. Over the past decade, Northeastern University and the Mass General Hospital (MGH) Sports Physical Therapy Residency Program has been SSU’s primary referral source for Physical Therapists interested in advancing their careers by becoming athletic trainers. SSU has accepted six Physical Therapists that were graduates of either Northeastern University Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program or the MGH Sports Physical Therapy Residency Program. Once the MSAT is approved, SSU expects to further develop a strategic plan to continue providing this pathway for Physical Therapists who have the desire to become Athletic Trainers.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
To provide athletic training students ample opportunity for quality academic and clinical experiences in which they gain knowledge, skill, and confidence.	≥80% student satisfaction on senior exit interview/ survey and alumni survey	Collect and interpret data on academic and clinical experiences through the master assessment plan. This data will be utilized to make targeted intervention to address identified areas of weakness	5-years
To prepare students to pass the Board of Certification Exam	>70% first time pass rate on BOC Exam	1. Effectively teach and assess all CAATE curricular content. 2. Two BOC review courses within MSAT Program. 3. Four online BOC self-assessment tests.	5-years
To prepare students for	1. 100% placement in	1. Continuous monitoring of	5 years of

employment, residency, and educational opportunities.	athletic training employment, residency, and/or terminal degree program. 2. Placement rate is measured by alumni survey data.	alumni and employer surveys to facilitate quality improvement in all aspects of the MSAT Program.	data with a focus on 3-year aggregate data
To assist athletic training students to develop professionalism in all aspects of their educational and clinical experiences.	Students will score at developing or entry-level on generic abilities (foundational professional behaviors) rubric prior to completion of program.	1. The student will be evaluated on the generic abilities rubric each semester by their academic faculty, clinical preceptors, and through self-assessment. 2. Continuous mentoring by academic faculty and clinical preceptors to provide exemplar professional practice in healthcare.	5 years
To provide athletic training students with a complete understanding of athletic training and the responsibilities and commitment that the profession entails.	Score of $\geq 80\%$ on preceptor evaluation of student performance on the generic abilities instrument Score of $\geq 80\%$ on all practical examinations in Clinical Experiences I-IV	The student will be evaluated by each Clinical Preceptor, as well as, the academic instructor of record for each Clinical Experience Course	5-years
To provide educational opportunities that challenge and expand the athletic training students' knowledge and skills.	1. Greater than 80% satisfaction rate on exit interview and survey 2. Evidence of teaching effectiveness based on interpretation of SIR II data, peer evaluations, and department chair evaluations. 3. Clinical preceptor compliance with all CAATE standards for clinical education	1. Continuous collection, summarization, and interpretation of alumni interview and survey data to identify strengths and weaknesses of program. 2. As part of the programs continuous quality improvement, areas of weakness will be corrected. 3. Faculty members will use SIR II data, peer evaluations and department chair data to identify strengths and weakness in their teaching, areas of weakness will be addressed through continuing education in teacher effectiveness. 4. Compliance with clinical preceptor CAATE Compliance Rubric.	2-years

EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The proposed program was reviewed by Jeff Konin, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Physical Therapy Department at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston RI, and Joseph Murphy, Ph.D., Department Chair of Athletic Training at Lebanon Valley College in Annville PA. The reviewers found that the overall program design effectively accomplishes the programs goals

and purposes and meets the standards of the accrediting body (CAATE). The curriculum was found to integrate both research and clinical practice with a strong emphasis on evidence-based practice. The team noted that the ongoing plan for program assessment is comprehensive and assures all stakeholders that the programs goals and objectives are being met. Drs. Konin and Murphy also found the space and equipment to be adequate and the budget to be reasonable.

The team recommended an additional full time faculty member to ensure successful classroom and out-of-classroom clinical responsibilities are fully addressed. The reviewers emphasized that SSU students have the highest first-time pass rate for certification with highly trained faculty and a proven track record, but that in order to move to the graduate level, faculty have to meet the program demands and collaborate with students on research. They also suggested allocation of resources toward conference participation by faculty to promote the image and reputation of the program among scholars in this field. As well, a comprehensive marketing plan to target regional and national prospective students was recommended. Additional staffing and curricular modifications were suggested and SSU responded by incorporating the external reviewers recommendations into the body of the proposal.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by **Salem State University** and external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **Master of Science in Athletic Training**.

ATTACHMENT A: CURRICULUM

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total # of courses required = [0])		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
*ATR700	Functional Anatomy for the AT	4
*ATR702	Principles of AT & Emergency Care	4
*ATR704	Neurological Exam & Immediate Care	2
*ATR706	Taping, Bracing, and Protective Equipment	2
*ATR708	Clinical Exam & Diagnosis I: Lower Extremity	4
*ATR710	Clinical Exam & Diagnosis II: Upper Extremity	4
*ATR712	Electrophysical Agents	4
*ATR714	Therapeutic Exercise	4
*ATR716	Evidence-Based Practice	1
*ATR718	Clinical Experience I	3
*ATR720	Clinical Experience II	3
*ATR800	Research Methods I	2
*ATR802	Clinical Path & Pharm	4
*ATR804	Administration & Professionalism in Healthcare	3
*ATR806	Manual Therapy	3
*ATR808	Clinical Decision Making	1
*ATR810	Clinical Experience III	3
*ATR812	Seminar in Athletic Training	3
*ATR814	Research Methods II	2
*ATR816	Clinical Experience IV	4
	Subtotal # Core Credits Required	60
Elective Course Choices (Total courses required = [0]) (attach list of choices if needed)		
	Subtotal # Elective Credits Required	0
Curriculum Summary		
	Total number of courses required for the degree	20
	Total credit hours required for degree	60

ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET

One Time/ Start Up Costs		Annual Expenses			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Cost Categories				
0	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	87,500	132,290	136,262	140,451
0	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	2,211	6,770	6,911	7,055
0	Staff	51,892	53,587	55,572	57,552
0	General Administrative Costs	23,000	23,690	24,401	25,133
0	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	3,000	0	0	0
0	Facilities/Space/Equipment	23,800	24,514	25,249	26,007
0	Field & Clinical Resources	0	0	0	0
0	Marketing	0	0	0	0
0	Other (Contracted Services)	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278
0	TOTALS	194,403	244,001	251,577	259,476

One Time/Start- Up Support		Annual Income			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Revenue Sources				
0	Grants	0	0	0	0
0	Tuition	78,400	139,300	147,700	156,100
0	Fees	190,962	356,263	396,634	440,151
0	Departmental	0	0	0	0
0	Reallocated Funds	0	0	0	0
0	Other - Capital Improvement & Other Fees	25,013	46,265	51,085	56,243
0	TOTALS	294,374	541,829	595,419	652,494

ATTACHMENT C: FACULTY

Summary of Faculty Who Will Teach in Proposed Program							
Please list full-time faculty first, alphabetically by last name. Add additional rows as necessary.							
Name of faculty member (Name, Degree and Field, Title)	Check if Tenured	Courses Taught Put (C) to indicate core course. Put (OL) next to any course currently taught online.	Number of sections	Division of College of Employment	Full- or Part-time in Program	Full- or part-time in other department or program (Please specify)	Sites where individual will teach program courses
Gallo, Joseph Professor	Yes	Therapeutic Exercise (C)	1	DAY	Full Time	N/A	SMS Department O'Keefe Center
DSc in Physical Therapy		Electrophysical Agent (C)	1				
		Manual Therapy (C)	1				
		Clinical Decision Making (C)	1				
		AT Seminar (C)	1				
		Clinical Experience (C)	2				
Norberg, Jaclyn Assistant Professor	No	Functional Anatomy (c)	1	DAY	Full Time	N/A	SMS Department O'Keefe Center
PhD in Biomechanics		Taping & Bracing (c)	1				

cs							
		Clinical experience (c)	1				
		Clinical Path & Pharm (c)	1				
		Clinical Exam and Diagnosis: Lower Extremity (c)	1				
		Prevention and Care	1				
Varnell, Michelle Assistant Professor	No	Principles of AT (c)	1	DAY	Full Time	N/A	SMS Dept. O'Keefe Center
PhD in Rehab Sciences		Research Methods I (c)	1				
		Research Methods II (c)	1				
		Evidence-Based Practice (c)	1				
		Clinical Exam and Diagnosis: Upper Extremity	1				
		Prevention & Care (c)	1				