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Utah State University

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**Executive Summary
Utah State University
Master of Fitness Promotion
01-10-2013**

Program Description

The Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Utah State University proposes a new professional Master of Fitness Promotion degree, with student admissions to start for Fall Semester 2013. This degree will replace the Corporate Wellness specialization of the current MS Health and Human Movement degree, with the specialization to be terminated upon approval of this degree. The degree program would best meet the needs of students who wish to pursue a professional degree rather than a research-oriented degree. The current Master of Science in Health and Human Movement would remain in the Department with three Plan A and B specializations (Exercise Science, Health Education, and Sports Medicine).

Role and Mission Fit

The mission of Utah State University is to be one of the nation's premier student-centered land-grant and space-grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first, by cultivating diversity of thought and culture, and by serving the public through learning, discovery, and engagement.¹

The offering of a Master's degree in Fitness Promotion is consistent with this mission by providing a high quality academic experience for the citizens of Utah and beyond.

Faculty

All faculty members contributing to this degree program will possess a doctorate in the academic discipline, have experience in instruction in graduate coursework, mentoring graduate students, and conducting research in the academic discipline. A summary of the faculty credentials are provided at the end of the proposal.

Market Demand

A person with a professional degree in "Fitness Promotion" can work in a variety of positions and settings in which a specialist is needed to develop programs that combat cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, metabolic disorders, and musculoskeletal problems. Employment opportunities are commonly found in fitness and wellness centers, hospitals and health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, senior centers, corporations and universities. A 2002 Bureau of Labor Statistics publication listed "employee wellness coordinator" among the new and emerging occupations. More recently, the Bureau predicted that job opportunities for fitness workers and cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialists will increase by 24% and 29%, respectively, between 2010 and 2020, faster than the average for all occupations.

Student Demand

Beginning with the Fall 2007 Semester, USU School of Graduate Studies listed 43 students have earned their degree in the program (Plan C of MS Health and Human Movement). Of these graduates, 27 were in the Corporate Wellness specialization, which is an average of 5.4 per year. Graduate student enrollment averages about six students each semester. It is believed that demand will increase with the identification of a separate, professional degree. Previous graduates of the Plan C (Corporate Wellness specialization)

¹ <http://www.usu.edu/president/missionstatement/>

have been employed as employee wellness coordinator at a major university (Utah State University), cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialist (Intermountain Healthcare), fitness specialist in assisted living facility (Sunshine Terrace), personal trainer at health club (Sports Academy), corporate wellness coach (Gold's Gym), health and wellness coordinator for national corporation (CSX Transportation), and many other varied positions within the health-fitness industry.

Statement of Financial Support

No new funds will be required or requested to support this degree program. Existing resources are in place to support the program.

- Appropriated Fund*
- Special Legislative Appropriation*
- Grants and Contracts*
- Special Fees/Differential Tuition*
- Other (please describe)*

Similar Programs Already Offered in the USHE

Weber State University offers a MS degree in Athletic Training. This is a substantially different degree program than "Fitness Promotion." In the Weber State program, students are trained to care for athletic injuries (e.g., "sports medicine"). Southern Utah University offers a Master of Sports Conditioning and Performance. The focus on this degree is the training of coaches for the purpose of improving sports performance. The University of Utah offers a MS non-thesis option titled "Coaching Wellness" that has a similar aim/objective and coursework to the proposed Master of Fitness Promotion.

**Program Description
Utah State University
Master of Fitness Promotion
01-10-2013**

Section I: The Request

Utah State University requests approval to offer a Master of Fitness Promotion effective Fall Semester 2013.

Section II: Program Description

Complete Program Description

The Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER) at Utah State University proposes a new professional Master of Fitness Promotion (MFP) degree, with student admissions starting Fall Semester 2013. . This degree will replace the Corporate Wellness specialization of the current MS Health and Human Movement degree, with the specialization to be terminated upon approval of this degree. The coursework and degree requirements will be the same for the MFP degree as for the previous Plan C option. The MFP is 40 credit hours (34 credits of coursework and 6 credits of practicum that involves a 400-hour fieldwork experience).

Unlike the Plan A and Plan B options within the current Exercise Science specialization, the MFP degree is geared toward current and future practitioners of health fitness. Therefore, the coursework and practicum experiences are designed to meet the needs of students who do not wish to pursue a terminal degree in the profession. While students in the MFP program will be required to complete rigorous research training (research methods and statistics courses), the primary focus of the degree is to acquire advanced skills specific to a profession in a health fitness setting. In addition to some of the same courses that MS students take (i.e., Advanced Exercise Physiology, and Advanced Biomechanics), MFP students take courses in ECG interpretation and Health Psychology, as well as health- and wellness-related electives from other departments (e.g., Nutritional Epidemiology, Sociology of Health, etc.).

Purpose of Degree

The MFP degree aims to meet the needs of students who desire to or currently hold a position within the field of health fitness. Students seeking advanced training beyond the baccalaureate level may do so for career advancement, need for further training in the field, or are new to the field of health fitness but already have an undergraduate degree in another field of study. This degree would not replace the exercise science emphasis within the MS in Health and Human Movement but rather meets the needs of students who do not foresee pursuing a PhD or a career as a researcher. Student's extensive fieldwork (practicum) experience further ensures a practical benchmark for a career as a health-fitness professional. The lack of an independent research requirement, such as with the Plan A and Plan B, distinguishes the MFP degree as a professional degree rather than a research degree.

Institutional Readiness

All administrative structures are in place to support the MFP degree. The MFP degree replaces the MS Plan C specialization for Exercise Science so current faculty loads, teaching assignments, and role statements will remain unchanged.

Faculty

No additional faculty will be required for the MFP. The Exercise Science faculty members have previously taught the required courses for the degree as part of the Plan C option for the Corporate Wellness specialization within the MS Health and Human Movement degree.

Marketing and recruiting for the new degree option will be done along with the MS degree options within the HPER department.

Staff

The MFP will not require additional staff. Faculty will continue to advise students as in the previous Plan C option and current office support can meet the needs of the degree program.

Library and Information Resources

No additional library or information resources will be needed for this degree.

Admission Requirements

The admission requirements will reflect the requirements for the USU Graduate School and the MS degrees offered in HPER. These are a minimum GPA of 3.0, a score in the 40 percentile or greater on the GRE or MAT, and three satisfactory letters of recommendation.

Student Advisement

The current doctoral level Exercise Science faculty will share student advisement for the MFP program, similar to their duties for the current MS in Health and Human Movement program.

Justification for Graduation Standards and Number of Credits

The 40-credit requirement exceeds the 30 credit minimum for a master's degree at Utah State University, provides a complete program of study with valuable practicum experience, and allows for a student to complete the degree program within the planned two-year period.

External Review and Accreditation

Currently there is not an accreditation process for a MFP degree.

Projected Program Enrollment and Graduates; Projected Departmental Faculty/Students

Based on previous Plan C enrollment, it is expected that five-ten students per year will be accepted into the MFP degree program.

Section III: Need

Program Need

The MFP replaces our current Plan C option in the corporate wellness specialization of the MS in Health and Human Movement. This degree best meets the needs of many students who desire to work in the health-fitness field but do not need or plan to pursue a doctoral degree. Without a non-thesis option, many students who are interested in this field will not apply for graduate studies, as a research-oriented degree does not match their career goals. Based on our previous experience with the Plan C option, we expect to attract students who have undergraduate degrees in kinesiology, exercise science, or other health- and fitness-related majors. If a student desires research training in preparation for doctoral study, the Plan A and Plan B options will still be available within the exercise science specialization.

Labor Market Demand

A person with a professional degree in “Fitness Promotion” can work in a variety of positions and settings in which a specialist is needed to develop programs that combat cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, metabolic disorders, and musculoskeletal problems. Employment opportunities are commonly found in fitness and wellness centers, hospitals and health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, senior centers, corporations and universities. A 2002 Bureau of Labor Statistics publication listed “employee wellness coordinator” among the new and emerging occupations. More recently, the Bureau predicted that job opportunities for fitness workers and cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialists will increase by 24% and 29%, respectively, between 2010 and 2020, faster than the average for all occupations.

The department has had great success with Plan C students finding employment in health fitness-related jobs, and does not anticipate anything different by offering the professional MFP degree.

Student Demand

The Plan C non-thesis option has been popular among many MS Health and Human Movement students who seek professional preparation rather than research preparation. We expect this to be the same for the MFP degree. Students have found excellent employment and practicum placements. The quality of the students who have applied for the Plan C are generally excellent, and it is expected that the MFP will also attract a high caliber of student.

Similar Programs

Weber State University offers a MS degree in Athletic Training. This is a substantially different degree program than “Fitness Promotion.” In the Weber State program, students are trained to care for athletic injuries (e.g., “sports medicine”). Southern Utah University offers a Master of Sports Conditioning and Performance. The focus on this degree is the training of coaches for the purpose of improving sports performance. The University of Utah offers a MS non-thesis option titled “Coaching Wellness” which has a similar aim/objective and coursework to the proposed Master of Fitness Promotion.

Collaboration with and Impact on Other USHE Institutions

No collaboration is planned or needed with other institutions in the USHE system.

Benefits

This new degree will best meet the needs of students who seek graduate study in fitness promotion to prepare for a profession in the field but do not desire or need to pursue doctoral study for their career aspirations. The emphasis on fieldwork (practicum) and relevant coursework will create a stronger health-fitness workforce for the state of Utah and beyond. The faculty will benefit by working on their own research rather than mentoring novice researchers. In addition, the department will benefit by graduating students in a timely fashion rather than have students who are not interested in research struggle through a research project. The university will benefit by an increase in qualified applications to a professional degree program.

Consistency with Institutional Mission

The mission of Utah State University is to be one of the nation's premier student-centered land-grant and space-grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first, by cultivating diversity of thought and culture, and by serving the public through learning, discovery, and engagement.²

² <http://www.usu.edu/president/missionstatement/>

The offering of a master's degree in Health Fitness is consistent with this mission by providing a high quality academic experience for the citizens of Utah and beyond.

Section IV: Program and Student Assessment

Program Assessment

The MFP program will strive to meet the highest possible professional and educational standards. The faculty meets regularly to assess curriculum needs and possible changes. We also solicit input from fieldwork supervisors, employers, past graduates, current students, and faculty. Student application materials (e.g., MAT scores, GPA), student diversity, graduation rates, and application numbers will also be monitored.

Expected Standards of Performance

Students will be expected to maintain USU graduate school GPAs while in the MFP program. Students are expected to have excellent performance while enrolled in practicum hours. A post-practicum presentation is required and evaluated by a committee of MFP experts.

Section V: Finance

Budget

No additional budget is required or sought to provide the degree program.

Funding Sources

Existing resources within HPER, EEJCEHS and USU are sufficient to support the degree program.

Reallocation

No reallocation is required.

Impact on Existing Budgets

No impact on existing budgets is required.

Section VI: Program Curriculum

All Program Courses

The MFP curriculum includes:

- A. Required Graduate Core (14 credits):
 - a. PEP 6300 Seminar: Human Movement (1 credit)
 - b. PEP 6400 Advanced Exercise Physiology (4 credits)
 - c. PEP 6800 Advanced Biomechanics (3 credits)
 - d. PEP 6810 Research Methods in Health Sciences (3 credits)
 - e. EDUC/PSY 6600 Research Design and Analysis I (3 credits)
- B. Required MFP Specialization (15 credits)
 - a. PSY 6470 Graduate Seminar in Health Psychology (3 credits)
 - b. PEP 6450 ECG Interpretation, Exercise Benefits and Prescription (3 credits)
 - c. PEP 6540 Neuromuscular Adaptations (3 credits)
 - d. PEP 6500 Practicum – on campus (2 credits)

- e. PEP 6500 Practicum – remote site (4 credits)
- C. MFP Electives (11 credits)
 - a. PEP 5100 Fitness Assessment and Exercise Programs (4 credits)
 - b. HEP 6000 Evaluating Health-Promotion Programs (3 credits)
 - c. HEP 6100 Current Trends in Health Promotion (3 credits)
 - d. NDFS 6200 Nutritional Epidemiology (2 credits)
 - e. NDFS 6210 Public Health Nutrition (2 credits)
 - f. NDFS 3020 Nutrition and Physical Performance (2 credits)
 - g. SOC 6460 Sociology of Health (3 credits)

New Courses to Be Added in the Next Five Years

No new courses are expected at this time.

Program Schedule

For the MFP degree, the following schedule is recommended:

Fall Semester Year One (Total Credits: 10 credits)

- PEP 6300 Seminar: Human Movement (1 credit)
- PEP 6400 Advanced Exercise Physiology (4 credits)
- PEP 6810 Research Methods in Health Sciences (3 credits)
- NDFS 6200 Nutritional Epidemiology (2 credits)

Spring Semester Year One (Total Credits: 11 credits)

- PEP 6800 Advanced Biomechanics (3 credits)
- EDUC/PSY 6600 Research Design and Analysis I (3 credits)
- PEP 6450 ECG Interpretation, Exercise Benefits and Prescription (3 credits)
- PEP 6500 Practicum – on campus (2 credits)

Fall Semester Year Two (Total Credits: 10 Credits)

- PEP 6540 Neuromuscular Adaptations (3 credits)
- PEP 5100 Fitness Assessment and Exercise Programs (4 credits)
- SOC 6460 Sociology of Health (3 credits)

Spring Semester Year Two (Total Credits: 9 Credits)

- PSY 6470 Graduate Seminar in Health Psych (3 credits)
- NDFS 6210 Public Health Nutrition (2 credits)
- PEP 6500 Practicum – remote site (4 credits)

(40 credits total)

Section VII: Faculty

Fitness Promotion Faculty

Name	Terminal Degree	Institution	Year Awarded	Subject of Degree	Years of Experience in Higher Education	Title @ USU	Years of Appointment @ USU
Eadric Bressel	EdD	Northern Colorado University	1999	Exercise Science (Biomechanics)	13	Professor	12
Dennis G. Dolny	PhD	Kent State University	1985	Exercise Science (Exercise Physiology)	27	Professor	4
Bree Studenka	PhD	Purdue University	2008	Motor Control	3	Assistant Professor	1
Richard Gordin	PhD	University of Utah	1981	Sport Psychology	32	Professor	32
Edward M. Heath	PhD	Oregon State University	1990	Exercise Science (Exercise Physiology)	22	Professor	13
Dale R. Wagner	PhD	Univ. of New Mexico	1997	Exercise Science (Exercise Physiology)	15	Assoc. Professor	8