BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATION

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science

RECOMMENDATION
This program meets the Chancellor's standards for baccalaureate degrees. There were no concerns identified in the review and approval is recommended.

Background and Request: Kent State University requests approval for a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science. Exercise science is currently a concentration in the BS in Physical Education program and enrollment in the concentration has steadily increased over the past several years. The exercise science concentration (with options in "exercise specialist" and "exercise physiologist") is endorsed by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) as preparation for ACSM certification as a health fitness specialist. Kent State University is also approved by ACSM to provide certification workshops for individuals seeking to become health fitness specialists.

ACSM Certification as a health fitness specialist currently requires a baccalaureate degree in a general health care field. By 2010, ACSM will require that endorsed programs have accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHE). Kent State University will seek accreditation from CAAHE and the proposed program has been designed to meet the CAAHE standards for exercise science and exercise physiology. The establishment of an independent degree program in exercise science will strengthen the application for accreditation from CAAHE. The university also anticipates expanding its relationship with ACSM to provide the other, higher level, certificates in exercise science and exercise physiology offered by ACSM. The establishment of an independent degree program in exercise science will also strengthen these applications.

Program Purpose/Mission: The Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science is designed to prepare individuals for the health care industry through foundation courses and concentrations in two areas: "exercise specialist" and "exercise physiologist". Students will have the preparation to seek a graduate degree in exercise science or another health care profession (e.g., physical therapy, medical school) or seek certification as a health fitness specialist from the ACSM upon completion of the baccalaureate degree. Kent State University has a graduate program in exercise physiology and the only Ph.D. in Exercise Science in the northeast Ohio region. The program will be under the leadership of the School of Health Sciences, College of Education, Health and Human Services.

Enrollments: Kent State University anticipates that new enrollments will come from existing students in the college and related majors and from transfer students. Enrollment growth is estimated at 14% per year, which the program can accommodate. Kent State University has sought letters of support for the program, reviewed the need for graduates and developed collaborations with University of Akron and Cleveland State University to mentor students and to provide laboratory facilities and research opportunities.

Curriculum: Students will complete a 20 semester hour core that includes an introductory course as well as courses in gerontology, nutrition, lifespan motor development, human anatomy and physiology, psychological dimensions of motor behavior and biomechanics. Students will then pursue a concentration in "exercise physiology" or "exercise specialist".

Resource/Faculty Needs: The university has sufficient physical resources and full-time faculty for the program. The exercise physiology lab is well equipped to support the program and houses the advanced equipment needed for exercise testing and research and teaching in exercise testing. Laboratories are also available for environmental and general physiology, behavioral medicine and exercise therapy for special populations (e.g, patients with Parkinson's disease). Collaborations within the university and other programs in the region will provide additional lab facilities. Budget support is sufficient and based upon a 14% increase in program enrollments.

End of Comment Period: July 29, 2009
No Comments Received, Recommend Approval

Approved

Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor — Date 8/14/09

mlc