Department\* 

Program Type: 

Degree Type: 

**Provide a brief summary of the proposed program changes and describe the rationale for the change(s):**

In 2015, the Athletic Training Strategic Alliance established that the professional degree in Athletic Training would be at the master’s level.  In light of this, the faculty and staff of the University of Delaware’s Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP) have been working diligently to create both an undergraduate program in Sports Health (BS) and a new graduate program of study in Athletic Training (MS).  In an attempt to capture and cultivate students interested in Athletic Training and who come to the University of Delaware as freshman students, this hybrid “3+2” model has been created whereby students will matriculate for their first 3 years as undergraduate students gaining the necessary pre-requisite coursework and checking off additional admissions requirements (see attached) as needed for the entry-level master’s degree program in Athletic Training.  It is anticipated that the initial 28 credit hours of graduate coursework taken during the 1st year of the entry-level master’s degree program in Athletic Training would be used to satisfy the 120 minimum credit hours required for the baccalaureate degree (Sports Health), with the additional coursework credit hours being used to satisfy the graduate degree.  Because there are no other Athletic Training education programs in the State of Delaware from which students could feed into UD’s entry-level MS-AT program, this unique “3+2” model will provide students who are native to UD an opportunity to merge into the MS-AT program directly.  Interestingly, during our early discussions about transitioning our faculty/staff looked carefully into creating a “4+1” program; a combination that is much more commonplace at UD.  However, when our accrediting agency came back with guidance and required that graduate programming must take place at a minimum over 2 years, our efforts quickly turned to the exploring the “3+2” option.  While the “3+2” model is inherently unique to the University of Delaware, it is not without precedent from the BSN to MSN program that previously existed in the School of Nursing.  Additionally, the “3+2” program concept for Athletic Training is already in place at one UD “comparator institution” – Texas A&M (see attached) and is being planned at 4 others including Indiana University, Iowa State University, Purdue University, and the University of Pittsburgh; although none of them are as far along as UD’s program in moving in this direction.   As the flagship institution for the State of Delaware, UD’s mission ties in closely with that of the state in support of many vital undertakings, especially that of health and social services.  In fact, the State of Delaware’s Division of Health and Social Services (DHSS) own mission statement reads “to improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations."  Since its’ inception in 1973, UD’s Athletic Training Education Program (the only AT program in the State of Delaware) has worked to support this mission and has provided many qualified athletic trainers throughout the State of Delaware as full-fledged allied health care professionals protecting the many health care needs of the state’s citizens; especially young student-athletes.  It is important to note that the transition from our current undergraduate ATEP to the MS-AT degree program will not require any additional space or faculty/staff resources and only involves the modification of an outstanding and highly successful undergraduate program.  As a bonus, the program stands to be strengthened by several new course offerings intended to provide interprofessional student and faculty interactions in support of the program’s mission and goals.  We believe that when fully implemented, 15-20 students who complete the “3” year portion of the program will likely merge to contribute to and join the cohort of 1st year master’s degree students coming to UD for the “stand-alone” entry-level master’s degree program in Athletic Training.  Additionally, and because very few of our “comparator institutions” are involving a “3+2” option, UD is likely to have a competitive edge from a recruitment standpoint helping us to attract potential freshman students interested in pursuing Athletic Training who might otherwise have gone to another school having a similar “3+2” option.  The fact that we are ahead of our comparator schools in moving forward with the “3+2” program, in our eyes further adds to the advantage that we have moving forward expeditiously in this direction; if we do not act now this competitive edge will vanish.  The added benefit of cost containment enabling students to truncate their educational costs by completing degree requirements in 5 instead of 6 years is certainly a bonus and supports UD’s efforts to make college affordable for all.

One logical concern that has been raised during our discussions with a variety of constituent groups here at UD is with the student who in the rare instance decides to drop out of the 1st year into the MS-AT degree program and what options will exist for this student?  To address this concern it was decided that the student would be able to utilize courses (30 possible credit hours) taken during that first year in the MS-AT degree program toward successful completion of the “Sports Health” major.  We plan to cross-list many of those 1st year courses and incorporate those as possible elective courses for the senior year program of study in Sports Health so that those credits can count toward the 120 credit hours needed to graduate with the BS degree.  However, it is important to note that the senior Capstone experience may still need to be completed if an appropriate substitution class is not compatible from those selected courses taken during the 1st year of the MS-AT degree program.

**List new courses required for the new curriculum. How do they support the overall program objectives of the major/ minor/ concentrations)?**

The mission of the Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP) at the University of Delaware is to prepare students to become competent, skillful, and compassionate entry-level professionals in the profession of athletic training.  Students involved in the Athletic Training Education Program will complete the university, departmental, and major coursework requirements and satisfy the clinical proficiencies via the Practicum experience and while working in various clinical environments. Upon completion of the Athletic Training Education Program, the student will be eligible to successfully sit for the Board of Certification (BOC) certification examination for athletic trainers. Furthermore, the student will be recommended for a Master of Science degree in Athletic Training.  Our mission is guided by 6 program goals and objectives:

1. Prepare students for entry-level opportunities in athletic training through the development of specific educational competencies and clinical proficiencies set forth by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) and Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE).

2. Prepare students to become proficient and capable health care professionals in future employment in athletic training or other allied health settings.

3. Promote acceptable standards of ethical conduct, while closely adhering to the NATA Code of Ethics - <http://www.nata.org/codeofethics/index.htm>

4. Provide students with opportunities to develop their skills in a variety of clinical settings and with a variety of physically-active individuals.

5. Expose students to a range of allied health professionals in didactic and clinical environments to enhance their inter-professional experience.

6. Embrace the university’s commitment to diversity and excellence by engaging our faculty, staff, and students.

With this in mind our curricular coursework has been arranged so that students will meet program goals and objectives, while at the same time satisfying the mandated educational competencies and clinical proficiencies outlined in CAATE’s Standards for the Accreditation of Professional Athletic Training Programs.

By combining coursework taken during the undergraduate “3” portion of the program along with the graduate level coursework taken during the “2” portion of the program, students will leave with an excellent foundation involving both theoretical and clinical knowledge to begin practicing as an entry-level athletic trainer.

**Attached to this proposal are the separate “Sports Health” and “Athletic Training” proposals that are circulating independently through the Curriculog system.**

Identify other units affected by the proposed changes and provide letters of support from those units. :

The majority of courses listed in the proposed Sports Health/Athletic Training 3+2 Program are offered as part of our home department’s (KAAP) normal course offerings.  There are a handful of classes that involve additional departments from which letters of support have been secured as part of the curriculum revision process for the proposed "Sports Health" major that is working through the Curriculog process separately.

**Resolution:**

WHEREAS,      the Department of Kinesiology & Applied Physiology (KAAP) in the College of Health Sciences has offered a successful program in Athletic Training education at the undergraduate level for the past 40+ years and

WHEREAS,      the undergraduate program in Athletic Training is accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) and

WHEREAS,      in 2015, the Athletic Training Strategic Alliance established that the professional degree in Athletic Training would be at the master’s level effective no later than the Fall 2022 and

WHEREAS,      the existing undergraduate program in Athletic Training is being phased out and will graduate the last class in May 2021 and

WHEREAS,      the proposed Sports Health/Athletic Training 3+2 Program contributes to one of the milestones on the University’s “path to prominence” to achieve excellence in professional education and to award an accelerated master’s degree in a cost-effective manner; be it therefore

RESOLVED,      that the Faculty Senate recommends provisionally for five years the approval of the establishment of a Sports Health/Athletic Training 3+2 Program.