

**Notice of Intent to Plan Master's Degree in Athletic Training**  
**Department of Kinesiology**  
**University of Wisconsin – Madison**

**Proposed Degree**

Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT)

The Department of Kinesiology is proposing a new Master's degree in Athletic Training (MSAT). This health sciences professional preparation program is currently offered as a baccalaureate degree; the new MSAT will replace the existing program.

**Home Department / School**

The program will be housed in the School of Education's Department of Kinesiology.

**Mode of Delivery**

The program will be offered in a face-to-face residential format that includes a variety of didactic course work combined with immersive clinical experiences.

**Primary Faculty Contacts**

Gary Diffie – Professor and Chair Dept. of Kinesiology

Andrew P. Winterstein – Clinical Professor Dept. of Kinesiology

**Program Description / Learning Outcomes**

The curricular model for the proposed MSAT degree program has been guided by several principles. The degree planning group has taken the following steps: reviewed existing health science programs on campus (e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant), met with key campus stakeholders, reviewed current CAATE Standards, evaluated our alignment with the 2015-2019 Campus Strategic Framework, assessed logical campus partners for collaboration, and insured adherence to the core competencies for health sciences outlined by the Institute of Medicine.

The Athletic Training Professional Preparation Program (MSAT) at UW-Madison seeks to be a leader in athletic training education by offering a program that will develop health care providers in athletic training who exhibit the highest levels of clinical scholarship, are dedicated to patient advocacy and social responsibility in health care, practice patient-centered care, and strive to address the burden of injury through a public health lens. The program is dedicated to service, scholarship and developing socially responsible clinicians.

Upon completion of the Athletic Training MSAT students will:

1. Understand the role of the athletic trainer within the broader health care system.
2. Demonstrate appropriate oral and written communication skills.
3. Develop and apply strategies to prevent the incidence and/or severity of injury and illnesses.

4. Demonstrate the clinical skills needed to appropriately diagnose patients for treatment and referral.
5. Apply clinical and decision-making skills to respond to acute injury and illness; including emergencies.
6. Assess patient status and develop treatment and rehabilitation that are consistent with contemporary disablement models.
7. Demonstrate clinical scholarship in the form of evidence appraisal and application to influence athletic training practice.
8. Maintain the highest standards of clinical practice by examining the quality of patient care through the use of patient outcomes.
9. Apply research methods to develop and evaluate clinical questions applicable to practice-based research environments while demonstrating an understanding of ethical research practice.

The proposed MSAT program is a 24month (55-60 credit) campus-based health science program that includes the opportunity for capstone clinical preceptorships in local environments and locations around the country. The curriculum is front loaded in year one (Summer, Fall, Spring) with a heavy didactic schedule and limited clinical experiences. The second year (Summer, Fall, Spring) stresses immersive clinical field placements supported by innovative modular on-line courses.

The curriculum is built upon a foundation of competency-based training and practice. The AT accreditation process ensures that programs provide educational experiences for athletic trainers to acquire and demonstrate competencies in the areas of prevention, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions.

The Athletic Training Program curriculum integrates these competencies throughout the students' training to provide a strong evidence-guided patient-centered approach to care. The program stresses the development of clinical scholarship that includes scientific inquiry, critical thinking, cultural competence and integrative learning. Principles of lifelong learning, professional leadership, advocacy, professionalism and ethical reasoning, guide the development of future leaders in athletic training who can meet the future needs of patients and the athletic training profession.

The program will partner with other health science degree programs (e.g. Master of Public Health- MPH) and graduate certificate programs (e.g. Health Advocacy) to enhance the AT offerings through interprofessional courses and learning/service activities. The MSAT program will collaborate with the MPH program to provide the option for a MSAT MPH dual degree (33-month) program for a limited number of students. The ability to draw upon the advocacy and

public health resources at UW-Madison will create a point of distinction for the MSAT program.

### **Resources | Resource Allocation**

The instructional and administrative resources to launch this new degree program will come from the existing resources of the current baccalaureate program and the funding structure for summer course offerings. In addition, we will request the addition of 0.75 to 1.0 FTE clinical instructional staff to accommodate anticipated increases in instructional load and expanded administrative needs in the area of field placements. The advising and administrative support currently dedicated to the existing BSAT program will continue to be dedicated to advising and administrative support for the new MSAT program.

### **Overview | Alignment with Mission**

The proposed Master's degree in Athletic Training will provide rigorous and comprehensive preparation for students seeking a health care career in athletic training. Athletic trainers (ATs) are multi-skilled health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to provide preventative services, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of injuries and medical condition. ATs practice in a range of clinical practice settings.

The University of Wisconsin – Madison has a rich history in preparing professionals in athletic training and has long operated at a level of excellence consistent with the campus mission. The goal of establishing the MSAT degree was outlined in the authorization and planning documents that established the current baccalaureate (BSAT) degree and this Notice of Intent is the next step in the planned evolution of this program. Offering the MSAT in Athletic Training is consistent with the campus commitment to a broad range of health science offerings. UW-Madison is Wisconsin's only comprehensive teaching and research university that houses a School of Medicine and Public Health, Pharmacy, Nursing, and a full complement of health profession programs. The UW-Madison is distinctive in Wisconsin as the only university where MD training, a range of health profession programs, and a comprehensive research mission are fully combined. The Athletic Training program is already a well-respected member of this health sciences community and fully contributes to the research, instructional, and outreach mission of the campus. The elevation of the program to a master's degree will enhance the program's ability to collaborate as an interprofessional partner with existing graduate programs. The goals of the proposed Master of Science in Athletic Training (provided above) are aligned with the mission of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the 2015-2019 Campus Strategic Framework. (<https://chancellor.wisc.edu/strategicplan2/>)

### **Program Need**

Over a thirty year span the Athletic Training program has evolved from an internship certificate program to its current baccalaureate degree offering. The program was accredited in the 1999-2000 academic year and was the second such program established in Wisconsin. The Athletic Training program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training

Education (CAATE). The CAATE in conjunction with the Board of Certification and National Athletic Trainers Association of deemed that all professional preparation programs in athletic training must be delivered at the Master's degree level. Programs will no longer be able to enroll students into BS programs by fall of 2022.<sup>1</sup> This decision to elevate to the Master's degree comes after extensive national discussion about the appropriate degree level for professional preparation of athletic trainers.<sup>2</sup> Reasons for recommending graduate-level education include (1) the need for a more sophisticated learner to fully assimilate the increasing demands of athletic training practice; (2) the opportunity to create curricula without the competing demands of baccalaureate education; and (3) the need to align educationally with our peer professions. Alignment with the other health science professional programs on campus would facilitate interprofessional education, a core competency recommended by the Institute of Medicine. Elevation of the program to the MS level would allow us to deliver an innovative curriculum without the scheduling constraints of important but competing institutional and prerequisite academic requirements. The gain in curricular flexibility would allow full-time immersive clinical experiences and expansion of the curriculum to create health care practitioners capable of effecting change in the practice of athletic training.

In addition to the administrative pedagogical needs outlined above athletic trainers are needed to meet the healthcare needs of the citizens of Wisconsin and beyond. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predict that employment of athletic trainers is projected to grow 23 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations.<sup>3</sup> Demand for athletic trainers is expected to increase as people become more aware of the long-term effects of sports-related injuries, and as a growing middle-aged and older population remains active. Increasing physical activity among the general population is frequently cited as a key mechanism to improve health and reduce the cost of care; demand for athletic trainers will grow as these programs are implemented as injury is a common impediment to continued physical activity. Athletic trainers are well positioned to implement a public health perspective to the burden of sports injury. This public health and health advocacy approach to care are cornerstones of the new degree proposal. Increased licensure requirements and regulation has led to a greater acceptance of athletic trainers as qualified healthcare providers in a range of clinical settings beyond traditional professional, university, and secondary school environments. As a result, third-party reimbursement is expected to continue to grow for athletic training services. Athletic trainers will benefit from this expansion because they provide a cost-effective way to increase the number of health professionals in an office based and clinical settings. Lastly, there continues to be a need for qualified health care professionals at the secondary school setting. The health disparities in access to athletic training services in these settings are well documented. Innovative programs are needed to address these gaps in care; a program at UW-Madison with identified collaborators in the public health realm and access to the broadest range of interprofessional collaborators of any system institution is uniquely positioned to create leaders and care providers to address these societal needs.

Athletic Training at UW-Madison was the second program in the State of Wisconsin to secure national accreditation (2000). Since that time five additional programs have been accredited in the UW-System. In addition to UW-Madison, LaCrosse, Oshkosh, Stevens Point, Eau Claire, and Milwaukee currently offer programs in athletic training. All are in the various stages of program planning for MS degree transition with UW-Stevens Point and UW-Milwaukee already matriculating students. UW Green Bay has indicated an intent to plan but unlike the other campuses mentioned, they have not been educating students in AT since the early 90's. The presence of multiple AT programs with distinct identities and approaches within the UW System provides students with broad pedagogical and geographical choices for athletic training education in Wisconsin.

We are confident that UW-Madison will continue to excel as a leader in athletic training education as the program transitions to a graduate model. Our tradition of excellence is illustrated by our current seven-year 100% first time pass rate for the Board of Certification exam and our exceptional record of student placement. The BOC pass rate places the program in the top 10% of all programs for this time span.

#### **Program Faculty and Staff / Planning Team**

The MSAT degree will draw on current faculty and staff providing instruction and leadership in the current program. The program is exploring using courses from the current Kinesiology graduate offerings as well as from outside the department (e.g. School of Medicine and Public Health).

#### **Athletic Training Faculty and Staff**

David Bell PhD, ATC – Asst. Professor  
Andrew Winterstein PhD, ATC – Distinguished Clinical Professor  
Sharon V. Clark – MS, ATC Assoc. Faculty Associate  
Julie Stamm PhD, ATC – Lecturer  
Patrick Hills-Meyer MS, ATC – Lecturer  
Alison Schwarz ATC – Lecturer (Clinical Instructor)

#### **Department of Kinesiology Graduate Faculty**

Gary Diffie, PhD – Professor and Chair  
Andrea Mason, PhD – Professor, Graduate Studies Committee Chair  
Lisa Cadmus Bergstrom PhD – Asst. Professor

#### **Affiliate Faculty**

Kathleen Carr MD – Family Medicine (SMPH)  
Barbara Duerst MS MPH – Faculty Associate – Public Health (SMPH)  
Timothy McGuine PhD, ATC – Distinguished Scientist – Orthopedics (SMPH)

## **AT Program MSAT Degree Planning Committee**

The AT Program Committee has taken on the task of serving as the MSAT Degree Planning Committee. In addition to the faculty and staff listed below the group has solicited feedback from students in focus group sessions.

Andrew Winterstein

David Bell

Sharon Clark

Julie Stamm

Patrick Hills-Meyer

Tricia DeSouza – Clinical Representative Intercollegiate Athletics

Ashley Parr - Clinical Representative Intercollegiate Athletics

Kathleen Carr – Medical Director AT Program

## **Letters of Support**

Letters of support have been requested from the following sources:

Occupational Therapy Program

Physical Therapy Program

Public Health Program

Physician Assistant Program

Center for Patient Partnerships (Health Advocacy Group)

Division of Intercollegiate Athletic Sports Medicine

Dept. of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation Division of Sports Medicine

1. Joint Announcement from Strategic Alliance on Professional Degree in Athletic Training: National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA), Board of Certification (BOC), Committee on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), National Athletic Trainers Association Research and Education Foundation (NATA-REF) <https://caate.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Strategic-Alliance-CCATE-email-pdf.pdf> Accessed April 2, 2018.

2. National Athletic Trainers' Association Executive Committee for Education. Professional education in athletic training: An examination of the professional degree level. [http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/The\\_Professional\\_Degree\\_in\\_Athletic\\_Training.pdf](http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/The_Professional_Degree_in_Athletic_Training.pdf) Accessed April 2, 2018.

3. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Athletic Training <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/athletic-trainers.htm> Accessed April 6, 2018.