

Contact: Rachel Boon

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ATHLETIC TRAINING PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORT  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report from the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Athletic Training Program in the School of Kinesiology, Allied Health, and Human Services at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI).

**Executive Summary:** The BA in Athletic Training program at UNI underwent its standard accreditation self-study review with the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), culminating in a site visit November 3-6, 2015. The review team identified several program strengths and non-compliance in three of the 109 standards. All areas of non-compliance have since been addressed by the university. CAATE awarded continuing accreditation to the program for five years to 2020-21 when the program converts to a master's degree level program only in alignment with new professional standards.

**Background:**

- ◇ **Board Policy.** This report complies with Board policy 3.8 on Accreditation Reporting, and aligns with strategic plan priority 1: Ensuring access to education and student success. It was submitted to the Board of Regents in October 2016. This review is to discuss the program improvements resulting from the accreditation visit.
- ◇ **Description of Program.** The BA in Athletic Training is a professional program that prepares students to become Board of Certification (BOC) certified athletic trainers. Certified athletic trainers are health care providers who work with athletes in the assessment, treatment, rehabilitation as well as prevention of injuries and other illness. Certified athletic trainers are able to obtain employment that will allow them to make significant contributions as a health care professional. The curriculum includes didactic and clinical experiences that focus on the Athletic Training Educational Competencies and Clinical Integration Proficiencies.

Due to changes in the professional qualification standards for the field, this program accepted its final cohort of undergraduate students in spring 2017, with completion of major requirements required by May 2020. Effective spring 2018, UNI will begin accepting students into its new Master in Athletic Training program.

- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** Accreditation is a process of quality assurance for a program that indicates it is recognized by peers in the field as having met national standards for quality education. To become a certified athletic trainer, students must graduate from an accredited athletic training program and pass a Board of Certification exam.
- ◇ **Accreditor Standards.** CAATE has 109 standards for professional programs that span 11 categories (sponsorship, outcomes, personnel, program delivery, health & safety, financial resources, facilities & instructional resources, operational policies & fair practices, program description & requirements, student records, and distance learning sites). The CAATE standards set a minimum requirement for compliance, and institutions are encouraged to develop policies and approaches that exceed these standards.

- ◇ Review Process. By July 1 of the year preceding the end of an accreditation cycle, programs must submit a comprehensive self-study to CAATE. The Athletic Training program at UNI initiated the self-study process internally in spring 2014 by reviewing the process with all faculty in the department, preliminary data gathering, notifications to experiential sites, and initial writing of the self-study.

By spring 2015, the faculty were engaged in weekly meetings to review the status of the self-study, write and review drafts, and evaluate the documents and data being gathered. Reviews by the Director of the School of Kinesiology, Allied Health, and Human Services, the Dean of the College of Education, the Provost and the President occurred in early summer. Final submission of the comprehensive self-study to CAATE was on June 22, 2015.

Through fall 2015, bi-weekly meetings continued with Athletic Training faculty to prepare for the November 3-6, 2015 site visit. A preliminary report from the site team was reviewed by the program, with 90 days to respond and correct errors of fact or provide clarifications. Any areas of non-compliance must be addressed in follow-up progress reports as designated by CAATE.

- ◇ On-Site Team Report. After the November 2015 visit, the review team identified strengths of the program and areas of non-compliance that required immediate attention and response from the university.
- ◇ Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
  - Administrative support for the program is evident from all levels.
  - The faculty and staff are committed, enthusiastic, and collaborative regarding their role in educating future athletic trainers.
  - The Program Director and Coordinator of Clinical Education are highly regarded for their attention to detail, excellent communication, and dedication to providing an outstanding academic experience.
  - The preceptors are commonly cited as influential and integral to the students' educational experiences.
  - The classroom and patient care facilities at University of Northern Iowa provide a high-quality learning environment.
  - Student interest in the program is high.
- ◇ Non-Compliance Identified by the Visiting Team. Of the 105 standards assessed, the program was found to be non-compliant for three standards: Standard 3 (Sponsorship-Affiliation Agreements), Standard 22 (Personnel – Clinical Education Coordinator (CEC) Appointment) and Standard 70 (Health and Safety – Training).

Institutional Response:

- **Standard 3:** Resolved immediately because no additional students were assigned to Northern Iowa Therapy for their clinical experience.
- **Standard 22:** An internal search for an Athletic Training Clinical Education Coordinator was initiated for a tenure-track, Assistant Professor in Athletic Training who could also serve in this position. The search resulted in the hiring of Tricia Schrage, who formerly held this position in a P&S classification.
- **Standard 70:** Now require all prospective, directed observation students receive HIPAA & FERPA training prior to beginning their observation experience. In response to the Site Visitors' recommendations for health and safety training, 1)

separate disciplinary policies have been created for disciplinary and behavioral issues, and 2) stand-alone program requirements such as NATA membership, senior exit interviews, blood borne pathogen training, and surgical observations have been added as requirements of the AT 3000 course. The remaining recommendations will be addressed as accredited program offerings transition to the master's level, Master of Athletic Training.

- ◇ Selected suggestions from Site Visit Team: Recommendations are not part of compliance but the site visit team may provide suggestions to strengthen the program.
  - Consider revising disciplinary procedures to separate processes for students in academic difficulty from those with behavioral issues.
  - Curricular adjustments in the order of bachelor's level coursework.
  - Imbed stand-alone program requirements such as National Athletic Training Association membership, senior exit interviews, blood borne pathogen training, and surgical observations into specific courses.
  - Consider revising syllabi by adding clear and concise language explaining to students how the lab and clinical integration components and their respective objectives are integrated into each course.
  
- ◇ Program Accreditation Status. CAATE awarded continuing accreditation to the Bachelor of Arts in Athletic Training Program in the School of Kinesiology, Allied Health and Human Services at the University of Northern Iowa for five years to 2020-21 when the program converts to a master's degree level program only in alignment with new professional standards.