External Review Team Report

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Master of Science, Major in Kinesiology

Texas A & M University - Corpus Christi

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Master of Science, Major in Kinesiology

I. Mission/goal/vision

Based upon review of the self-study, the graduate catalog, and the Texas A & M at Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) web site, as well as from a lengthy discussion with Dean Hernandez, it appears that the missions of the University, College of Education (COE), and Department of Kinesiology are not in alignment. Because several administrative changes have occurred within the University and the College, significant revisions to the mission, vision, and goals of the Department of Kinesiology are warranted. In an attempt to align itself with the unfolding strategic plans of both the University and COE, we suggest that the Kinesiology faculty work together to revise/update the Department’s mission, vision, and goals, as they will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in guiding the future directions of the Department.

II. Observations:

Faculty

Four faculty teach within the graduate program. We had the opportunity to meet at great length with three of the four faculty members (i.e., Drs. Randy Bonnette, Liette Ocker, and Dr. Spaniol). Due to scheduling conflicts, however, we were only able to meet briefly with Dr. Don Melrose. It is evident that these faculty members respect one another, are cordial to one another, and work very well together, collaborating on research projects and curriculum initiatives. From review of their curriculum vitae, their scholarly productivity, in particular, is strengthened by their apparent support of one another, as they serve as co-authors on each other’s research articles, research abstracts, presentations, and grant proposals. Due in large part to their positive working relationships, we firmly believe that the Department will likely be successful in continuing to offer exceptional undergraduate programs, enhancing its graduate program, and fostering faculty research and service in ways that achieve balance among teaching, service and scholarship.

Students

The graduate program began in Fall 2006. During the past three years, it has experienced exceptional growth:

- From Fall 2006 to Fall 2009, enrollment increased by 300% (or from 5 to 20 majors).
- Each year for the past three years, enrollment increased on average by 101% (or 8 majors).

1 Dr. Randall Johnson has taught KIN 5301 History and Philosophy of Kinesiology. However, due to a lack of scholarly productivity, his contract was not renewed.
With regards to the composition of the student body, the program attracts more males than females. During the previous three years, the male-to-female ratio averaged 3.25 to 1. This imbalance between genders, however, is not uncommon in Kinesiology programs, esp. those (like TAMUCC) that emphasize sports performance/advance strength and conditioning. Finally, with regards to ethnicity, the program contributes to the university’s achievement and maintenance of Hispanic-Serving Institution status, as Hispanic students made up, on average, 35% of the majors enrolled in the graduate Kinesiology program during the past three years.

As the primary reviewer, I had the privilege of meeting with five graduate students currently enrolled in the Kinesiology graduate program. They were extremely complimentary of the graduate program, in general, and the graduate faculty, in particular. They appreciated that the faculty:

- Are passionate about teaching.
- Serve as exceptional mentors.
- Emphasize joining and actively participating in professional organizations.
- Teach them how to become more effective coaches.

Students felt that they learned how to effectively teach sport-specific skills and to enhance sports performance through the utilization of technology\(^2\) and techniques=strategies related to sports psychology. They also felt that their coaching self-efficacy and competence were greatly impacted through the experiential, learning-type activities folded into many of the graduate courses.

- Stay up-to-date with the current literature.
- Provide them with many opportunities to participate in research.

Furthermore, their favorite classes included research design, exercise physiology, and biomechanics, and they look forward to taking the newly created Advanced Nutrition and Advanced Strength and Conditioning courses.

While these students were very reluctant to identify weaknesses/opportunities for growth, they did offer the following suggestions:

\(^2\) In fact, one student purchased the Dartfish system for his sports training business. He felt that this purchase enhanced the services that he is able to provide his clients and was proud to report that “it has already paid for itself.”
• Provide internship opportunities to gain much needed practical experience, esp. for career changers.

As the graduate program grows in number of students, faculty workload will inevitably increase for many reasons. In particular, an increase in number of students will result in a concomitant increase in the number of final research projects or theses that must be supervised by faculty. To require all students to engage in a thesis or a final research project may be quite daunting for the limited number of faculty. One potential solution is to give students the option of choosing between a final research project/thesis or an internship/practical experience.

• Include laboratory activities in the advanced exercise physiology course.

• Provide more graduate assistant positions.

Instead of working any kind of job to support their schooling, the students prefer to work in some capacity related to their studies.

• Identify reputable and relevant professional certifications that will make students more competitive in the current job market.

• Prepare students for certifications (e.g., the American College of Sports Medicine Health and Fitness Instructor) in addition to the ones offered by the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

• Expand course offerings (e.g., exercise testing and prescription for healthy adults and special populations, including children, elderly, and those with chronic diseases.)

• Offer different tracks.

All students agreed during the interview that most of the core courses provided them with a solid foundation of knowledge. However, they would prefer to choose from either tracks/specializations (e.g., a research or a clinical track) or different sets of directed electives that prepare them for different professions falling under the vast umbrella of Kinesiology (e.g., coaching, research/academia, sports management, or health and fitness promotion).

• Provide career guidance/career education.

When asked what they will do with their master’s degrees, the student responded quite differently. One said that he will receive an increase in pay at his current job for attaining a master’s degree, another said that he will pursue a Ph.D. in aging, wellness, and activity, and two students were
undecided and did not really know what their master’s degrees were preparing them for. One student said that he will like to go into coaching. However, upon further discussion, he realized that he will not be able to coach in the public schools without a certification in teaching.

• Remove EDFN 5301 Introduction to Research from the degree plan.

All five students agreed that the information covered in EDFN 5301, Introduction to Research, and KINE 5307, Research Design in Kinesiology, was redundant. Specifically, they felt that EDFN 5301 was relevant to teacher preparation and educational administration but not Kinesiology. They felt that KINE 5307 provided them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to successfully design and conduct a research study, analyze resulting data, and disseminate results. The students felt that the Kinesiology degree would be strengthened if EDFN 5301 was removed and they were allowed to take a more relevant 3-hour course.

• Instead of requiring KINE 5301, History and Philosophy of Kinesiology, offer it as an elective or eliminate it from the degree plan.

The students failed to see the relevancy of KINE 5301 and believed that their educational experience would be strengthened if they were given the option of selecting a graduate course that better met their professional needs.

Curriculum/program

The Master of Science, Major in Kinesiology, is a fairly general degree that provides students with a strong foundation and the flexibility of tailoring the degree program according to their professional goals/needs. However, as evidenced in the previous section, students pursuing this degree may not have clearly defined professional goals. Therefore, tailoring the program to meet their needs is difficult. Perhaps a solution would be for graduate faculty to identify what they do well, what they would like to specialize in, and what they would like to be known for. This exercise should then help faculty better focus the degree. As a final step, we suggest the faculty answer the question, “What will graduates with this degree be able to do?” By answering this question, the faculty may be better able to market the program and enhance the attractiveness of the program. If prospective students can understand what the program can offer them and how it can prepare them for a certain career or advance them in their current profession, then the program will be more attractive and likely grow in number of students.

According to the self-study, the faculty are considering developing specializations in physical education/coaching and the broad area of exercise science. In Texas, there is little pay incentive, if any, for physical education teachers to seek a master’s degree in physical education. Thus, the demand for such a specialization
is lacking. A specialization in exercise science may lead to confusion by
prospective students, as they may be uncertain as to what a specialization in
exercise science will prepare them for. From review of program faculty
curriculum vitae and lengthy discussions with faculty, it is obvious that the
strength of the faculty lie in sports performance for two primary reasons: 1) the
program is endorsed by the National Strength and Conditioning Association, and
2) the research interest of a majority of the faculty lie with testing and
enhancement of athletic performance. A degree specializing in sports
performance offered by a department with faculty strong in this area of research
should be appealing to prospective students and thereby result in an increase in
graduate enrollment. As another potential area of specialization, the faculty may
want to take advantage of the rising national emphasis on disease prevention
through the promotion of physical activity and health. Specializations in clinical
exercise science or promotion in physical activity, for instance, may be developed
to prepare students for advanced certifications through the American College of
Sports Medicine and ultimately leadership positions in health clubs, healthcare,
and corporate fitness facilities or professional positions requiring fitness
testing/evaluation and exercise program design for healthy and/or high risk
populations. Finally, program faculty may also consider interdisciplinary
programs, such as offering an advanced degree in Sports Management with the
College of Business. [It should be noted that to bring either of the latter two
suggestions to fruition, administration will need to invest in the Department’s
infrastructure. For instance, to offer a successful program in Sports Management,
at least two faculty specializing in Sports Management are needed.]

By determining what graduates will be able to do with a graduate degree in
Kinesiology, program faculty at TAMUCC will be able to determine whether the
curriculum/degree program needs to be revised (i.e., whether classes need to be
added, deleted, or modified). Indeed the degree program includes a strong group
of courses that should remain in the core, including:

- KINE 5311, Statistics in Kinesiology
- KINE 5312, Clinical and Applied Exercise Physiology
- KINE 5338, Motor Development
- KINE 5340, Mental and Emotional Aspects of Motor Performance

However, other courses within the core should be re-evaluated to determine
whether they should remain in the core or be moved to applied electives:

- KINE 5301, History and Philosophy of Kinesiology
- KINE 5308, Organization and Administration of Kinesiology
- ETEC Elective

Finally, other courses should be considered for entry into the core. Those include:

- KINE 5327, Qualitative Motion Analysis
- KINE 5307, Research Design in Kinesiology
Based on the intent of the degree program, directed electives or areas of specialization can be established. For instance, courses such as advanced nutrition and advanced strength and conditioning can be included in a specialization designed to prepare students for careers in conditioning and power, while exercise testing and prescription for healthy and special populations courses can be developed for a specialization designed to prepare students for careers in disease prevention through physical activity promotion.

Facilities & Resources (e.g., library, funding, external funding if appropriate, equipment program, program budget – all within context of resources available to TAMUCC).

Facilities/equipment: With the new Nursing/Health Sciences and Kinesiology building, the Department of Kinesiology is better positioned to meet the rising campus emphasis on graduate education and scholarship. Dr. Killebrew should be commended for his ingenuity in including Kinesiology in the plans for this new building and in procuring the necessary funding. The three new, fully equipped laboratory facilities will attract quality faculty and students, enhance student learning, and provide faculty and students with the resources necessary to conduct meaningful research.

Funding/program budget: Currently, the Dean of the COE oversees allocation and distribution of most fiscal resources. Since the COE is comprised of very diverse departments, it may be more prudent for the chairs, in consultation with their program faculty, to make budgetary decisions, as they have a better idea how monies allocated to their Department should be spent. After discussing this with Dr. Hernandez, it appears that he is agreement and is pursuing the idea of decentralizing the budget.

The Department currently has a program development budget of $16,000 that, according to the self-study report, is adequate for supporting travel, faculty/staff development, computer hardware and software, recruitment and retention of students, costs associated with production and printing of marketing materials, and purchase of office furniture/supplies. If is difficult, however, for us to imagine that $16,000 is adequate to cover this wide range of expenses. Consequently, we encourage Dr. Bonnette, in consultation with the program faculty, to review the Department needs and expenses to better determine whether the program development budget is sufficient to help it meets its goals.

Finally, the Department’s 1-hour activity and laboratory courses generate about $8,000 in equipment and course-related fees per year. From these fees, the Department is able to purchase instructional-related equipment.

In short, monies from the Department’s budget, course and equipment fees, and the COE appear to be adequate for supporting faculty travel as well as the purchase of instructional equipment and materials, marketing materials,
computer hardware and software, and office furniture. However, with the expanding mission of the University, we suggest reviewing the budget. Lastly, decentralizing the budget should also give the Department greater control over purchases and other budgetary decisions.

**Library.** Due to lack of time, we were unable to review the library resources in great depth. However, the faculty and students mentioned that they would like for the library to prescribe to more kinesiology-related journals.

**Extramural funding.** Last year, the College procured 3 million dollars in extramural funding. This funding was primarily limited to teaching and service-oriented proposals/projects. As the University embraces a culture of research, expectations for extramural funding related to research will increase. Historically, the Kinesiology Department has focused on teaching, esp. at the undergraduate level. As a result, extramural funding has not been a priority of the Department. To better align itself with the direction of the University and the College, faculty with strong research skills should begin to seek external funding. This endeavor, however, should be strategic, as not all areas of Kinesiology are highly fundable. With the rising national emphasis on disease prevention, the areas of Kinesiology or related fields that are most fundable are community health, physical activity, and wellness initiatives.³

To increase the Department’s successful procurement of grant funding, current faculty may need to either receive/seek professional development focusing on grant writing/management and/or upper administration should provide the Department with new faculty positions to hire additional faculty who have strong research and grant writing skills in disease prevention. Nevertheless, expectations for extramural funding must be minimized until faculty workloads are rebalanced.

### III. Outcome Assessment:

Due to a lack of time, we were not able to discuss outcome assessment procedures at any great length with program faculty or administration officials. Therefore, the following includes our observations primarily limited to review of faculty course syllabi and products.

**Courses:**

With the impending SACS re-accreditation, the Department faculty should review their objectives and outcomes stated on their course syllabi. It was unclear to us whether these objectives/outcomes are the student learning outcomes (SLOs) that will be used to satisfy SACS standard 3.3. From our understanding, the SLOs should be included on course syllabi and should be very specific and measurable. See Appendix A for an example of an appropriate SLO for a Kinesiology graduate

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³ Though sports performance is not necessarily funded by NIH, TEA, DHHS, or other government agencies, there are creative ways to procure external funding related to this area (Funding suggestions will be discussed in greater detail in the final section).
program and related method of assessment, result, action plan, and evidence of improvement.

**Program:**

From a review of the self-study, the Department has collected some data on job placement both while students are attending the University and following graduation. We encourage program faculty to continue to collect this information, as it may guide the future direction of the Department. Furthermore, to strengthen the program, we also suggest that the faculty survey local businesses, schools, healthcare facilities, etc. to determine community needs/market demands.

**Final project/theses/capstone:**

A major strength of the graduate program is the final research project or thesis. The degree plan is laid out in such a way that courses build upon each other, thereby providing students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to design a meaningful research study, conduct the research study, analyze and report the results, and present the findings. Most impressively, several student projects have been presented or accepted for presentation at state, regional, and national conferences. In the future, we encourage faculty: 1) to identify stellar projects and assist students in writing and submitting manuscripts to peer-reviewed research journals, and 2) require students completing a thesis to submit their thesis in manuscript format. In short, the consistent research focus across all graduate courses and the culminating research projects provide many benefits, including: 1) engages students in the research process, 2) fosters relationships between faculty and students, and 3) enhances faculty research productivity.

**IV. Conclusions**

Throughout this report, we have identified strengths, addressed opportunities for growth, and provided suggestions for strengthening the program. The intent of this final section is to highlight the major strengths, to identify the areas most warranting attention/prioritization, and to make recommendations for enhancing the graduate education program.

**Strengths:**

1. The collegiality of the graduate faculty – The four graduate faculty members appear united and respectful of one another. They seem committed to enhancing and growing the graduate program by sharing responsibilities that require them to work above and beyond their normal workload. While all deserve special recognition, we feel that Dr. Bonnette should be commended especially for establishing such a positive work environment in light of the limited resources and other work-related challenges. It is very apparent that
his faculty respect his leadership, share in his vision, and enjoy working with him and each other.

2. The ability of graduate faculty to collaborate on scholarly activities – To launch the new graduate program, the four graduate faculty agreed to teach additional classes and assume additional responsibilities related to the successful delivery of the program. During this time, the University and College expectations for research have risen. The graduate faculty have been able to meet this rising emphasis on research while teaching overloads through their collaborative efforts. Because they share common research interests and also contribute unique skill sets to their partnerships with one another, they are able to conduct meaningful research.

3. Mentoring of students – Faculty devote a significant portion of their time mentoring/advising students. As a result, the students feel a strong connection with and loyalty to the faculty. We firmly believe that such fostering of positive relationships between the students and the faculty provides many benefits, including enhancing student learning, retention, and overall educational experiences as well as faculty morale, fulfillment, and quality of work-life.

4. Involving students in research – Faculty work tirelessly to involve students in all aspects of research. We believe that these skills and experiences (and resulting national presentations and published abstracts) help students be more competitive in the market place and/or be adequately prepared to pursue a doctoral degree. In addition, when students present their research or submit their research for publication, faculty scholarly productivity increases, as faculty typically serve as second authors.

5. Using technology to enhance student learning and to provide graduates with a unique skill set, thereby also increasing their marketability – With regards to enhancing student learning, Drs. Ocker and Melrose use digital audiofiling to make their lectures available to students. This instructional strategy allows students to listen to lectures repeatedly in order to enhance comprehension of difficult concepts. With regards to helping students develop a unique set of technologically-based skills, Dr. Spaniol, for instance, teaches students how to use the Dartfish video software. Briefly, this software enables trainers/coaches to analyze an athlete’s technical performance and make sound scientific-based biomechanical recommendations/adjustments in order to effectively improve performance.

6. The new building and fully equipped research laboratories – The new building, including classrooms and start-of-the-art laboratory facilities, is a significant sign of the University’s commitment to the Kinesiology Department. We

4 Six of the nine faculty (specifically, Barnes, Bonnette, Melrose, Ocker, Seiger, and Spaniol) perform most of the advising. Each have approximately 75 advisees. Undoubtedly, this type of service weighs heavily on their overall workload.
firmly believe that “if you build it, they [quality faculty and students] will come.” Furthermore, the new laboratories will no doubt augment faculty scholarly productivity.

Weaknesses/Opportunities for Growth:

1. Faculty workload – Currently, three of the four graduate faculty teach 4 to 5 courses each semester. This is rather excessive given that the faculty are also required to participate in scholarship and curriculum development as well as recruit and advise students. At comparable universities, faculty teach two to three courses per semester. In short, we consider faculty workload an impediment to growing both the graduate and undergraduate programs, to revising/enhancing all degree programs, and to promoting faculty scholarship, including the procurement of external research dollars.

2. The lack of graduate assistant positions – At present, the Department has only one graduate research assistant position. Offering more graduate positions will, for instance, increase graduate enrollment, entice quality students to apply, reduced faculty teaching load, and support faculty scholarship.

3. The scholarly productivity in the light of the University’s rising emphasis on research and extramural funding – As mentioned throughout this document, the mission of the University and COE is expanding to include a greater emphasis on scholarship. While the faculty have shown a strong commitment to research by presenting their research at conferences and publishing research abstracts, the number of publications in peer-reviewed journals and successful grant proposals is limited. In our opinion, this is more than expected given the current faculty workload.

4. The number of faculty relative to the number of variation in degree offerings and number of students – To understand how this could be considered a weakness, the reporting of several statistics is warranted:

   • According to the self-study, there are currently 9 full- and part-time faculty (4 who teach at least four courses and 5 who teach two – three classes per semester). The student to faculty ratio is slightly more than 50 to 1. However, when considering full-time equivalent (FTE) in terms of teaching, the student to FTE ratio increases to more than 69 to 1.6

   • The Kinesiology Department offers a Bachelor of Science, Major in Kinesiology (with four areas of specialization), a Bachelor of Science,

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5 Dr. Bonnette receives a 2-course release (i.e., 6 workload credits) each semester for administrative duties. Thus, he teaches two courses (i.e., the equivalent of 6 credit hours) each semester. It should be noted that chairs at comparable universities teach 1 to 2 courses per semester.

6 This ratio is based on a Fall 2008 head count of 456 Kinesiology majors. Retrieved on May 18, 2009 from the [http://pie.tamucc.edu/factbook/student_enrollment/student_enrollment.html](http://pie.tamucc.edu/factbook/student_enrollment/student_enrollment.html).
Major in Athletic Training, and a Master of Science, Major in Kinesiology. In total, the Department offers 7 degree options or 1 degree option for every 1.3 faculty (or 1 degree option for every .9 FTE).

- During the last 3 years (i.e., since the inception of the graduate program – Fall 2006), the number of graduate and undergraduate Kinesiology majors has increased 28% (from 355 to 456). When limited to the number of graduate majors, the number of Kinesiology majors has increased at a much greater rate (i.e., 300% from 5 to 20 majors). During the same time period, the total student enrollment of the university rose 6% (from 8,584 to 9,007) and the graduate enrollment (master’s only) rose slightly more than 3%.

When considering these statistics, it is evident that the Department is outpacing the University in terms of enrollment growth despite rather large faculty workloads and insufficient number of faculty. Thus, we are of the opinion, that the Department does not have enough faculty to sustain the pace of the enrollment growth in the number of Kinesiology and meet the accompanying demands of the growing student population as well as meet the emerging research expectations of the University and the COE.

5. The low number of graduate students enrolled in the graduate Kinesiology degree - It is our understanding that the University aims to have 20 to 25% of total student enrollment be comprised of graduate students, though we recognize that this does not apply to all Departments. Nevertheless, using this mark as a target for enrollment allows for the determination of general enrollment objectives. At present, the Kinesiology Department has 436 undergraduate majors. Based on the University enrollment goal, a reasonable target for graduate enrollment in this Department would be 109 to 145 majors. However, at this time, the Department has only 20 graduate students, which equates to only 4% of its total enrollment. Of course, this is to be expected given that the program was initiated only three years ago and currently only has four graduate faculty.

6. The general nature of the Master of Science, Major in Kinesiology – The current graduate degree provides students with a great foundation in Kinesiology. However, we are concerned that prospective students researching different graduate programs may not understand what professional careers this degree program will prepare them for. Furthermore, based upon my interview with select graduate students, it was evident that a few were unclear as to what they could do with their degree.

Recommendations

The weaknesses will be easily addressed if attention is devoted to the current infrastructure. Some strategies will be affordable while others will require a financial commitment/investment on the part of administration. As it is the case
with any investment, there are no guarantees. However, we feel that due to market demands, the strength of the faculty, and the national focus on disease prevention through promotion of physical activity, health, and wellness, the return on the University investment will be significant. To this end, we recommend that following:

1. Offer more graduate assistant positions to increase graduate enrollment, to reduce faculty workload, and to support faculty scholarship productivity. In particular:
   a. Hire graduate assistants to teach the undergraduate physiology and biomechanics laboratories and hire undergraduate student workers to assist the graduate assistants during class - Each semester, a total of 6 laboratories are offered. At a workload credit of 1.5 per course, an additional 1.5 graduate assistants will be needed. While funding may be a concern, these courses generate 10 to 12 student credit hours per course and should thereby pay for themselves. As another benefit, Drs. Spaniol and Melrose will no longer have to teach these courses, and therefore, their workload will be reduced to a more manageable load.⁷
   b. Collapse adjunct positions into graduate assistant lines - In other words, replace per course adjuncts who teach activity courses with graduate assistants.
   c. Contract graduate assistants with area schools, sports teams, the student recreation center, and athletic teams - For instance, provide a graduate assistant trained in coaching or athletic training to a local school for $12,500 per semester (to cover the cost of a graduate assistant position). The graduate assistant will be required to be enrolled in 9 hours of graduate course work per semester.

2. Creative Entrepreneurship – Extramural funding comes in many forms. While the University would like to see the procurement of more grant dollars from such agencies as NIH, TEA, and DHHS, there are other, more creative ways to generate revenue. Because the specializations of the current faculty are related to sports performance, then the Department should offer strength and conditioning-type workshops and camps for coaches and a variety of athletes ranging in age and skill-level. With the new laboratory facilities, the faculty can also offer exercise testing-type services related to the analysis of technical performance. Such initiatives can generate funding, provide students with practical experience, bring people to campus (which is great for marketing purposes), and serve as a valuable source of research data for the faculty.

3. Reduce faculty workload by providing them with at least a one-course release for research each semester (in other words, require them to teach no more

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⁷ Based on the rate of growth of the undergraduate program, another section of lecture and 3 sections of laboratory courses will need to eventually be offered for both biomechanics and exercise physiology. When that time comes, an additional 1.5 graduate assistant positions will need to be provided to the Department.
than 3 classes each semester). While this will eventually require the University to fund more positions, creative/affordable strategies can be implemented immediately:

a. Create a differential workload policy - For instance, tenured faculty who conduct little or no research might teach a 4:4 load, those who meet research expectations might teach a 3:3 load, and those who exceed current research expectations might teach a 3:2 load.

b. Offer larger sections or be creative with course rotation, perhaps not offer the same course each semester.

c. Replace faculty teaching laboratory and freshman-level classes with graduate assistants.

d. Encourage faculty and provide them with support (e.g., professional development and administrative assistances) to seek external funding to buy them out of teaching a course or two.

It is worth noting that the weaknesses discussed in this report are primarily due to infrastructure. If the University cannot fund new positions, but would like the Department to grow its graduate program, then the Department may need to discuss decreasing the number of degree options or introducing enrollment management at the undergraduate level.

4. Revise Graduate Curriculum – As discussed throughout the report, including the curriculum/program section, more direction is needed in the graduate degree plan. Specializations need to be developed and may include:

a. Sports Performance - Based on the make-up of the current faculty, Sports Performance is an obvious specialization that would require little commitment of resources.

b. Sports Management - With Dr. Ocker’s expertise, Sports Management might be another specialization that can easily come to fruition, as it may require the addition of only one new faculty position and the cooperation of the College of Business.

c. Health and Wellness Promotion/Physical Activity Promotion/Clinical Exercise Science – This specialization will require quite a large investment from the University. More positions will need to be added and faculty will need to be brought in with reduced teaching loads to develop the curriculum and seek external funding.
Appendix A

Example of a Student Learning Outcome

**Outcome 1:** Based on results from a comprehensive health-related assessment and goals of a client, graduates with this degree will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to prescribe a safe and effective exercise prescription (including intensity, duration, frequency and mode of physical activity) for improving body composition, cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility of apparently healthy adults.

**Method 1:** Students enrolled in Advanced Tests & Measurements (PE 5305) will complete a comprehensive exercise prescription activity. Given the fitness results of apparently healthy fictional characters, students will develop safe and effective exercise programs. The students will be required to show their math and provide reasoning behind their prescription. Their responses will be compared to an answer key. The correct answers will be based on the American College of Sports Medicine principles for safe and proper exercise programming of an individual. Their answers will also be evaluated based on the accuracy and completeness of their answers. For instance, when asked 'what is the proper heart rate for training at moderate intensity,' students should be able to calculate the target heart rate based on the fictional clients age and resting heart rate. Eighty percent of students will score 80% or above on this activity.

**Results 1:** In the academic year of 2008-2009, 23 students enrolled in PE 5305 completed a comprehensive exercise prescription activity. The instructor used an answer key to evaluate this activity. Students were evaluated based on thoroughness (as they were required to show all math) and accuracy of response. 20 out of 23 received a 80% or better on the activity. In other words, 87% of the students enrolled in PE 5305 met the standard of scoring 80% or higher on the exercise prescription activity demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities to prescribe a safe and effective exercise prescription (including intensity, duration, frequency and mode of physical activity) for improving body composition, cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility of apparently healthy adults.

**Action Plan:** Based upon review of student responses and instructor observation, the program faculty will: 1) devote more class-time to prescribing exercise to enhance muscular fitness and promote a healthy body weight (as too much class time was devoted to enhancing cardiovascular endurance); 2) to integrate more case studies designed to give students more practice on how to develop a comprehensive fitness program based on one's health-related fitness, fitness goals, and health status; and 3) to revise the assessment activity (i.e., have students prescribe exercise for athletic and non-athletic fictional clients/subjects).
Evidence of Improvement: In an effort to improve this outcome, this new assessment strategy was developed and implemented in Spring 2009. Because this course is only offered during the Spring semester, data using this new assessment instrument has only been collected once. The goal for this outcome was for all students to receive a passing score on this activity. While the goal was not met, we feel that student learning occurred for most students, as 87% of the students achieved the standard score of 80% or higher set for this particular assessment method. Nevertheless, as indicated above, program faculty will use the results from Spring 2009 to further enhance this outcome.