

In May 2003, the Faculty Senate approved the Bachelor of Science in Health Studies as a new undergraduate major. In order to become a permanent program at the University of Delaware, the major must undergo a five-year review which includes this self-study report.

When the major was established, it was agreed that it would begin with small numbers, no more than 15 students. There are currently 10 students pursuing the Health Studies major. We purposely limited the number of majors to assure that the Health Studies does not become an option for students who are unable to fulfill the requirements for other majors within the college. This was a concern expressed by the Senate at the time the major was instituted and we carefully screen students to insure that this does not occur. Students must have a clear focus for further education or for a career in order to be accepted into the Health Studies major. They must have an interest in the broad area of health careers that can not be attained through another major within the college.

To date, we have graduated 29 students with a Bachelor of Science in Health Studies who have pursued a variety of careers and post-graduate educational opportunities. Graduates are employed in multiple health-related settings as professionals and managers and many have pursued graduate degrees. Exit interviews have been conducted with most students who graduated from the Health Studies major. Specific examples of employment or post graduate activities include:

- **Perfusionist**
- **Accelerated nursing students**
- **Dental school student**
- **Occupational Therapy masters degree students**
- **Pharmaceutical sales representative**
- **Chiropractic student**
- **Manager of a fitness center.**

This interdisciplinary program has allowed numerous students to remain at UD even when their career choice did not fit into a specific UD major. Maintaining a retention and graduation rate above the national average is one of the University of Delaware's academic priorities and this major has helped to attain both of those goals. The graduation rate for those in the HS major is 76%. Of those who did not complete the degree, four of the students need only one course to finish the degree and one has completed all required coursework, but needs to improve his GPA to be eligible to graduate. Three students have been academically dismissed from the University based on their grades, and only one of these was dismissed before her last UD semester. Two of them would have been eligible for graduation if they had successfully completed their final semesters.

In reviewing the Ten Goals of Undergraduate Education, the Health Studies major is addressing many of these goals through its individualized curriculum design including the practicum experience. Students are required to take courses that develop skills in communication, use of technology, and quantitative reasoning. Through the six-credit practicum, they learn to work independently, outside of the traditional classroom setting while meeting the need for both a capstone experience and a Discovery Learning experience. At the same time, they also develop collaborative skills, by working in various settings. Examples of these practicum sites include:

- hospital operating rooms
- fitness centers including corporate fitness centers
- physical therapy clinics
- cardiology rehabilitation clinics.
- strength and conditioning programs in both institutional and private centers.

Coursework assists students to become eligible for internships at local hospitals such as St. Francis Hospital, Milford Hospital and A.I. DuPont Institute, where they have gained experiences in the areas of

- Speech and Occupational Therapy
- Podiatry
- Chiropractic experiences

The ability to integrate the knowledge and skills learned throughout the Undergraduate program has enabled these students to be successful in their placements.

This year the Health Studies major added a Pre-Occupational Therapy degree option offered through a cooperative agreement with Thomas Jefferson University. This pre-professional track allows students to prepare for a master's degree program while pursuing an Undergraduate Degree at UD. Students will follow a three-year curricular track that includes all the prerequisite coursework needed to transfer into the Entry-Level Master's Degree program in Occupational Therapy at Thomas Jefferson University. Since they will earn at least 90 credits at the University of Delaware, students will be eligible for a Bachelor's degree from the University of Delaware. Credits earned during the first year at Jefferson will be counted towards the completion of the B.S. degree in Health Studies from UD. Once completed, students will continue at TJU for another year and a half to earn their M.S. in Occupational Therapy.

Admission decisions for the OT program will be made by a joint admissions committee of the University of Delaware and Thomas Jefferson University. Students will be able to enter the program either as a UD freshmen or after the completion of 30 or fewer UD credits with a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.3. This new option in Health Studies met an unfilled need for students with OT as their career goal. Students often were confused about which major to pursue to be prepared for an OT masters degree program, and this option allows them a clear and direct pathway to OT. If a student decides not to attend TJU, they will be able to complete the Bachelor of Science in Health Studies and then be positioned to enter other OT programs or pursue other career options. Plans are underway to market the program more widely to increase awareness of the major.

Currently, we are negotiating with PCOM for a similar option for a Physician Assistant's Program that will articulate with the Health Studies major. These two new opportunities will allow students to enter professional programs at other Universities not available at UD. These options allow the Health Studies major to expand in a deliberate and intentional way. Preparing students for accelerated nursing programs is another potential area of expansion for the Health Studies major. With the critical nursing shortage and the limits on all undergraduate nursing programs, accelerated nursing programs are helping to alleviate these shortages. The Health Studies major has sufficient flexibility to prepare students for programs at many institutions with their diverse course admission requirements.

The advising for this degree is handled entirely in the Dean's Office by the Assistant Dean. As we implement the OT option within Health Studies, careful advisement will be crucial so that students are prepared to begin their master's degree program on time.

Since this major is managed in the Dean's Office, as the new initiatives in this major expand, it will become important to develop a governance committee to oversee the growth of the Health Studies major and make suggestions for curricular revisions, as needed. This committee will include representatives from each School/Department within the College and the Associate and Assistant Deans of the College of Health Sciences.