

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs
Consent

AGENDA ITEM: 5 – I (1)

DATE: May 9, 2023

SUBJECT

Request to Seek Accreditation – BHSU (CAAHEP)

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 1:10](#) – Relationship of Curriculum and Instruction to Statutory Objectives

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Board of Regents Policy 1:10 specifies that “Each campus must seek and receive Board approval before applying for initial accreditation or an expanded scope of accreditation for academic programs.” In accordance with Board policy, South Dakota State University requests approval to seek accreditation from the following accrediting agencies:

Accrediting Agency: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

Program: Exercise Science (BS)

Advantages: The Certified Exercise Physiologist (ACSM-EP) exam is required for graduates entering the workforce as an exercise physiologist. The ACSM-EP exam is overseen by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) which, in turn, recognizes the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) as the accrediting agency.

By 2027, in order to sit for the Certified Exercise Physiologist (ACSM-EP) certification, candidates must graduate from a CAAHEP-accredited Exercise Science undergraduate program. A preliminary analysis of the current Exercise Science program at BHSU indicates the program is close to meeting certification requirements; thus, receiving CAAHEP accreditation is a reasonable and obtainable goal.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, awards institutional accreditation for higher education institutions in South Dakota. A variety of unique organizations award specialized/program accreditation within distinct programs or departments at Regental institutions. A general

(Continued)

DRAFT MOTION 20230509_5-I(1):

I move to approve BHSU’s request to seek accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs for their BS in Exercise Science.

reference document on institutional and specialized/program accreditation is available on the BOR website at the link below.

- [Special Analysis: Accreditation in Higher Education](#)

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

BHSU anticipates a one-time application fee of \$750 for initial accreditation, and an annual fee of \$600 to be covered through department funds. Other costs would include roughly \$3,000 for travel expenses for the site visit.

Board staff recommends approval.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – BHSU Request to Seek Accreditation Form: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

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Request to Seek Accreditation Under BOR Policy

1. Institution: Black Hills State University

2. Program(s) seeking accreditation: Exercise Science

3. Level of program(s) involved in accreditation:

	Master's Degree
	Doctoral Degree
x	Bachelor's Degree

4. Accrediting Agency: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

5. What are the advantages of accreditation?

The Certified Exercise Physiologist (ACSM-EP) exam is required for graduates entering the workforce as an exercise physiologist. The ACSM-EP exam is overseen by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) which, in turn, recognizes the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) as the accrediting agency.

By 2027, in order to sit for the Certified Exercise Physiologist (ACSM-EP) certification, candidates must graduate from a CAAHEP-accredited Exercise Science undergraduate program. A preliminary analysis of the current Exercise Science program at BHSU indicates the program is close to meeting certification requirements; thus, receiving CAAHEP accreditation is a reasonable and obtainable goal.

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education establishes the standards and guidelines for postsecondary programs that prepare students to be exercise physiologists. At BHSU, this is the undergraduate Exercise Science major that prepares graduates to take the Certified Exercise Physiologist (ACSM-EP) exam which then enables graduates to enter careers in cardiac rehabilitation and exercise physiology.

- A. *Accreditation through CAAHEP will improve the Exercise Science Program at BHSU.* Students who earn a degree from a CAAHEP accredited program receive a broad education in each of the Five Job Task Analysis domains outlined by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) for a Certified Exercise Physiologist (EP-C). The ACSM is recognized as the leader in the field of health, fitness, and sports medicine. Another South Dakota Board of Regents institution offering the same Exercise Science degree as BHSU, is currently accredited through CAAHEP. Thus, in order to ensure our program is providing the same high-quality education to Exercise Science students it is essential the Exercise Science program at BHSU also be accredited through CAAHEP

- B. *Students graduating with a CAAHEP certified degree will be recognized for completing a rigorous, comprehensive education in exercise science.* This national recognition will provide our students with an advantage when applying for a wide variety of exercise science-related positions, graduate programs, or professional programs. The prestige associated with a CAAHEP-certified degree is recognized by employers and graduate admission committees; as a result, BHSU graduates will have a competitive advantage.
- C. *Gaining CAAHEP approval will allow the exercise science program to become more competitive in attracting the most talented students.* Even though BHSU occupies a unique niche as the only comprehensive university in western South Dakota, we have not been able to recruit some of the best students to our program because other universities in the region, including South Dakota State University, University of Mary (ND), North Dakota State University, and Metropolitan State University of Denver (CO), offer CAAHEP-certified degrees and can use their certification as a recruiting tool for prospective students. Having a certified program will make BHSU more attractive to these highly qualified students, especially those interested in studying at a small liberal arts institution, and will improve the quality of students coming to our program. Additionally, approval will enhance our ability to recruit international students, as CAAHEP-certified degrees are recognized worldwide. Once accredited, the BHSU Exercise Science program will be included in a searchable database of CAAHEP-approved programs.
- D. *Meeting CAAHEP certification requirements will greatly improve the exercise science program.* In order to meet the standards of a CAAHEP-certified degree, BHSU has adjusted learning objectives to follow the five domains of the job task analysis described by the ACSM for a certified exercise physiologist.
- E. *CAAHEP certification increases the quality of the exercise science education given to students with other majors and minors.* Exercise science is a significant component of other scientific disciplines taught at BHSU, including Physical Education majors and Coaching minors, and provides essential scientific education for pre-health-professional students. A stronger, more comprehensive exercise science program significantly improves the background that is built for students in these other fields and strengthens education in all areas of science, not just exercise science. This will prepare BHSU students to make more informed, scientifically justified decisions when dealing with issues pertaining to health and fitness.

6. What are the anticipated costs involved in accreditation, including:

- A) Costs involved in undergoing self-study and preparing the application for accreditation.
- CAAHEP has an initial institutional accreditation fee of \$750.
 - Once accredited, CAAHEP has an annual institutional fee of \$600.

- The CoAES has an initial accreditation fee of \$750, with an annual fee of \$500 thereafter.

B) Out-of-pocket costs related to dues or site visits.

- The out-of-pocket costs for accreditation must cover expenses associated with the on-site review. The CoAES estimates on-site review costs to be between \$1,500 and \$2,000. To ensure adequate funding is available for the on-site review, the Exercise Science department estimates the cost associated with the on-site review to be no more than \$3,000. The site visit is a one-time occurrence and must take place within one year of submitting the application for accreditation.

C) Base budget implications including incremental costs and minimum base resources required (dollars and FTE).

- There is currently no minimum faculty requirement outlined by CAAHEP accreditation standards. Our current student to faculty ratio within exercise science is adequate to achieve accreditation. Our program has sufficient laboratory space to ensure students receive instruction in line with the knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in the ACSM EP-C JTA.

7. What is the source of the resources needed?

The School of Behavioral Sciences and the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences support the decision to seek accreditation. Both the school and the college will allocate funds as available to assist with the cost of accreditation. The exercise science department has adequate funds coming from the exercise science discipline fee which will help cover the cost of accreditation.

8. What is the estimated date for submission of accreditation application?

December 1st, 2023

Institutional Authorization (President)