

Athletic Training Education Program

Self-Study Report



Presented to the
Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training
Education

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Self-Study Report of the Athletic Training Education Program of Point Loma Nazarene University

Section I: The Self-Study Narrative

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) is a private, liberal arts university founded in 1902. Geographically, it is impressively located on the western slope of the peninsula, overlooking the Pacific Ocean in San Diego, California.

In 1981, the first Certified Athletic Trainer was hired at PLNU. The Physical Education Department housed an emphasis in Exercise Science/Athletic Training, which served the needs of students inclined to pursue related careers. Students interested in Athletic Training careers accomplished the internship route to the NATABOC certification examination.

At the advent of the educational reform by the NATA and its Education Council, the PLNU administration and Physical Education Department faculty determined that the university should aspire to CAAHEP accreditation. A feasibility study directed by the Provost and Dean of Professional Studies, with the assistance of the Department Chair, resulted in a proposed curricular plan. The entire Point Loma Nazarene University faculty voted unanimously to create and support the major in the Department of Kinesiology in the spring semester of 1998. A CAAHEP accredited ATEP existed at the local state university, but San Diego County is the seventh largest urban area in the United States, and the institutional mission of PLNU is markedly different than that of the state university. In light of these findings it was determined that we should establish a niche in Athletic Training in the region.

The newly established ATEP instituted an entirely new curriculum of didactic and clinical courses. Additional full time faculty athletic trainers joined the ATEP in 1995, 1998, and 2002. Presently, the ATEP faculty is thriving with four full-time faculty members (3 with Ph.D.s), one adjunct faculty member, and one faculty member on leave pursuing her Ph.D.

In the fall of 2003, following the completion of the inaugural self-study and subsequent site visit, the ATEP achieved CAAHEP accreditation, and was subsequently granted CAATE accreditation. Leading up to and following the time of the self-study and CAATE accreditation, the PLNU ATEP has enjoyed excellent administrative support from the Provost, the area Dean and the chair of the Department of Kinesiology. As one of only six accredited academic units on campus, the academic support and resources for operation of the ATEP are very significant and greatly appreciated by the Program Director and the ATEP faculty.

Substantial expansion to the clinical education rotations have occurred over the past five years and are a point of distinction of the ATEP. Instructional and clinical personnel, now totaling twelve persons, are in place for all six of the ATEP clinical courses. Clinical Instructors now include the ATEP Medical Director/Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. David Chao, and his Physician's Assistant at the OASIS Medical Group, various physical therapists/athletic trainers at Rehab United Physical Therapy, a family practice physician at Fassett-Allen Family Practice, an

Osteopathic Physician at Pacific Beach Urgent Care, and four athletic trainers at Point Loma High School and Point Loma Nazarene University.

The most recent change to the clinical rotations occurred in 2006. Point Loma High School (PLHS) was chosen as the affiliate site for the sophomore level clinical education experiences (equipment intensive and lower extremity assessment). Sophomores had formerly accomplished these experiences at Sweetwater High School (SUHI). After a 7 year educational affiliation with SUHI, led by faculty ACI Nicole Baker-Cosby, professor Baker-Cosby went on leave to pursue her Ph.D. at the University of Virginia. Lindsay Donnelly, ATC was subsequently hired as an adjunct faculty member to accomplish the clinical instruction of our sophomore students. Because Professor Donnelly had been serving as Head Athletic Trainer with PLHS, it was naturally fitting that we begin a clinical affiliate relationship there. The ATEP has since enjoyed a tremendous relationship with the school administration, including the Principal, Vice Principal and Athletic Director. In the spring of 2008, productive meetings began with these administrators and the high school district representatives to substantially expand both classroom and clinical facilities at PLHS. The school has applied for and been granted part of a \$1 billion grant—San Diego County Proposition S—which will provide funds for an athletic training facility (projected at \$4 million) to insure compliance with CAATE requirements for clinical education.

Thus, the PLNU ATEP began the Self-Study process for reaffirmation of CAATE accreditation with a robust faculty, educational program, and clinical affiliate sites each in place. To accomplish the ATEP Self-Study Report, a committee of faculty, administration and medical/health care professionals were invited to participate by the Program Director.

The Program Director chaired the initial planning session on January 25th, 2008. An orientation to the purposes and procedures of the CAATE accreditation and self-study process was presented and the timeline for task completion was established. Review of the didactic and clinical education curricula, the PLNU ATEP Handbook and policies and procedures ensued.

The self-study committee consisted of the following PLNU administration, faculty, and affiliated health care professionals:

David Chao, MD	ATEP Medical Director, CI
Anthony Durfee, MS, PA-C	Physician Assistant to Medical Director, ACI
Lindsay Donnelly, ATC	Adjunct Professor, Athletic Trainer, ACI
Susan Ganz Ph.D., ATC	Professor, Athletic Trainer, ACI
Becky Havens Ph.D.	Associate Provost/Dean, Social Sciences and Professional Studies
Leon Kugler Ph.D., ATC	Professor, Director of Exercise Science, ACI
Carroll Land Ph.D.	Director of Athletics
Brandon Sawyer, M.Ed., ATC	Assistant Professor/ACI
Lacey Troth, BA, ATC	ATEP Alum, 2008
Jeff Sullivan Ph.D., ATC	Kinesiology Dept. Chair, Director of ATEP, CIE, ACI
Karen Windoffer, CFNP	Nursing Faculty, Nurse Practitioner: Wellness Center

The committee assignments were as follows:

Chao-Donnelly-	Clinical Instructors; Medical Director policies. Oversight and development of first ATEP clinical internship at PLHS, advocate for clinical and classroom facilities; floor plans of high school affiliate and campus lay-out. Implementation and assessment of Foundational Professional Behaviors, Insurance instruction and administration;
Durfee-Ganz-	Preceptorship, instruction in General Medicine and senior clinical rotation. Physical Resources; Admission policies; Policies/procedures for environmental hazards and extreme weather; interface with AT service program; OSHA; floor plans of clinic, offices and campus lay-out; Work policy; First Responder
Havens-	Program Assessment; Sponsorship; Program Director/Department Chair oversight; Professional development; Operational Policies and Fair practices
Kugler-Land-Sawyer-	Assistance with Initiation; integration; synthesis. Kinesiology department concerns. Clerical/support staff; Student Work policy, First responder; Interface with athletics Athletic Training Clinic interface; Outcomes assessment; Development of eportfolio through Blackboard™, Inventory: instructional, modalities/rehab, first aid/emergency care, learning resources-library/electronic/video/models.
Sullivan-	Initiation, integration, and synthesis of self-study. Mission Statement; Faculty responsibility; Financial resources; Admission policies; Outcomes assessment, developing and implementing evidence-based practice; Promoting and elevating scholarship, research presentation and publication. Kinesiology Department concerns.
Windoffer	Psychosocial Intervention and Referral; Clinical Education; Student applicant health status assessment; Communicable disease policy
All Members	<i>Review curriculum and edit drafts of self-study.</i>

From November, 2007 through September, 2008, the Program Director engaged members of the self-study committee in critically analyzing all aspects of the ATEP. Each committee member was instructed to identify programmatic strengths, weaknesses, and potential opportunities to improve the effectiveness and quality of the educational program. The Program Director then began crafting the initial draft of the narratives and appendices while considering input from the self study committee. The narratives were then distributed to each member of the committee for feedback on structure and substance. A second draft, edited to include the committee's feedback, was completed. Committee members were given the second draft and instructed to focus specific attention on areas of the narratives as outlined above.

On August 25th and on September 2nd, 2008, members of the committee met to discuss specific elements of the ATEP, to interpret what had been learned from the evidence contained in the Self Study Report, and to discuss ways in which the evidence could be used to improve the overall effectiveness of the ATEP relative to the distinct mission and learning outcomes of PLNU. Specific program modifications and improvements were discussed by the committee. Discussion focused on ensuring continued academic excellence as we live out the ATEP mission to prepare proficient practitioners who pursue further education and professional standing, who live lives of service as modeled by Jesus Christ, and who are liberally educated.

Following the September 2nd committee meeting, the Program Director made final edits to the narrative, and composed a summary of the committee's findings (Programmatic Summary), which is herein submitted to the CAATE. The enclosed Self-Study Report reflects the consensus of the committee and represents a broad range of interests in the program.

Programmatic Overview

The self-study review process has been a significant and informative experience for the stakeholders of the PLNU Athletic Training Education Program. This resulting Self-Study Report represents a considerable step toward improved educational effectiveness. The report outlines the ways in which the ATEP's goals and objectives are being realized, it communicates the data the self-study committee has gleaned from various assessment tools, and it provides evidence for PLNU's assertion that the ATEP meets the CAATE's *Standards for the Accreditation of Entry-Level Athletic Training Education Programs*. Programmatic strengths, weaknesses, and methods by which the weaknesses are being addressed by the ATEP are discussed herein.

The Point Loma Nazarene University ATEP heartily supports the mission of the University to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. The ATEP continues to provide distinctive and robust learning experiences which accomplish this mission in the lives of AT students.

Program Strengths and Points of Distinction

The Educational Program. The Athletic Training major is a rigorous and effective means by which PLNU students are prepared for and projected toward an entry-level career in Athletic Training. AT students are challenged by a curriculum that is broad and deep in its dimensions. The curriculum encompasses all of the expanded subject matter areas listed in the *Standards*. Because of the careful planning and logical sequencing of coursework and clinical experiences in the ATEP, the faculty contends that learning over time occurs naturally as a function of the educational plan.

Throughout their tenure, students are encouraged to mature in the didactic, psychomotor and affective areas of athletic training. Students are taught and shaped through PLNU's rigorous, evidence-based curriculum, through the variety of challenging clinical experiences, and through the qualified faculty and instructional staff. The didactic courses provide the students the foundation on which to build robust clinical experiences.

The Faculty. The heart of any academic program is the teaching faculty. Because all PLNU ATEP faculty members also serve as clinical Athletic Trainers, a cohesive blending of didactic and clinical instruction is readily accomplished, resulting in a consistent educational experience for students. Faculty members instruct competencies in the didactic courses, observe and provide feedback to the AT students as they apply the skills and gain confidence in the laboratory setting, and then direct the clinical practicum courses which assess clinical mastery of the skills. This marriage of didactic and clinical instruction is a clear point of distinction.

The Clinical Education Staff and Sites. The clinical education experiences are a distinguishing hallmark of the PLNU ATEP. The metropolitan San Diego area affords the ATEP a wealth of clinical opportunities and diverse patient populations that prepare students for employment in a variety of healthcare settings. Qualified and renowned clinical instructors who model compassionate healthcare serve the ATEP and mentor students. The Medical Director is a steadfast advocate of athletic training, and the clinical instructors are passionate about guiding students toward clinical maturity.

Student Transformation. The faculty and staff at PLNU are motivated by their concern for the success of the students they serve. One of the most gratifying outcomes of the self-study process was the creation of the *Conscious Competence Learning Model* (Document J2), which lays out the educational philosophy of the ATEP and describes the progression of the AT student through the program. The overarching *academic* focus of the ATEP is clearly on accomplishing entry-level clinical proficiency in students. However, the self-study committee appreciates that the mission of the ATEP is much larger than this. ATEP faculty members have the strong desire to see students transformed through their educational experiences. The self-study report discusses the various means by which such transformation is accomplished through the didactic and clinical education course progression and sequencing. The report also attempts to describe the personal, professional, and spiritual transformation that occurs as faculty members closely mentor AT students throughout their tenure. Through face-to-face assessments with ACIs, students are provided valuable feedback and are encouraged toward clinical maturation and professional behaviors; and through a robust and thorough clinical education component, faculty ACIs are engaged with students for numerous hours, modeling a compassionate care-giving approach, and establishing profound relationships with students in the process. The Self Study Committee was unanimous in their agreement that the transformational work that occurs as the result of these faculty and student interactions is foundational to the PLNU ATEP experience.

Culture of Scholarship among Students and Faculty. An exciting culture of scholarship and evidence-based clinical practice has recently been borne in the ATEP. Students have conducted and presented original research at regional athletic training meetings, faculty have published in high-impact medical journals and have presented at NATA and ACSM national conferences, and students and faculty have collaboratively engaged in an exchange of current, evidence-based academic and clinical practices. This culture of scholarship has begun to expand the voice of students and faculty among the larger athletic training community, and has fostered academic excellence among AT students, encouraging them to become active in advancing their profession.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The self study committee identified the following areas needing improvement:

- The leadership and accountability of the ATEP should be better distributed. The Program Director communicated this need to ATEP faculty and administration during the self-study process. The PD will delegate the Clinical Education Coordinator responsibilities beginning in 2009-10.
- The clerical support for the ATEP has been lacking in the past. This need has been addressed by our area Dean and our Provost, who hired a student to assist the Kinesiology department assistant on specific ATEP needs. An additional full-time Kinesiology Department Assistant is a top budgetary priority for the 2009-10 year.
- Programmatic assessment is enhanced by the systematic quantification and interpretation of outcomes. Over the past 3 years, our data gathering and analysis has not been consistent. This is a function of both the previous and current PD focusing more on AT student assessment than on assessment of clinical sites and alumni. We commit to building a culture of assessment in the ATEP where the quality of assessment and the interpretation of outcomes benefit faculty and students. We will interface with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to accomplish consistent assessment of students, clinical rotations, ACIs/CIs, and alumni.

- Data provided by alumni indicates that the ATEP is largely accomplishing its mission and goals; however, assessment outcomes are lacking and participation among alumni can be increased. With new developments in online surveys, the faculty will seek to expand our alumni website to enhance the evidence that demonstrates accomplishment of our stated learning outcomes.
- The athletic training room at Point Loma High School must become equally accessible for both genders and must be ADA compliant. This has been communicated to the Principal and Athletic Director, who have applied for and been granted part of a \$1 billion grant which will provide direct funds for building an athletic training facility to insure compliance with CAATE requirements for clinical education.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GROWTH

The self study committee identified the following as exciting areas for growth:

- Given the recent changes in the BOC examination, revision of the mock certification exam would benefit students. A developmentally appropriate exam is being considered for the first, second, and third year cohorts.
- A concerted effort is needed to socialize AT students into the profession of athletic training. While continuing to promote student membership in the NATA and presentation at professional conferences, the ATEP faculty have added various mechanisms to expose students to the NATA and the BOC including: discussing *NATA Position Statements* in class, utilizing the current *Role Delineation Study* to review for the BOC exam, and developing the *Student Assessment Form* to capture professional behaviors that are foundational to athletic trainers.
- Contact should be made with transfer students prior to their matriculation to PLNU to ensure that they have met the prerequisites and have a smooth transition, applying directly to the program with no additional semesters added to their course of study.

CONCLUSION

The Self-Study Committee contends that these identified program strengths and areas for improvement will ensure continued program effectiveness. We are confident, and have documented evidence, that the students graduating from the PLNU ATEP are well prepared to take the BOC examination and to assume leadership in the Athletic Training profession. The didactic and clinical education structure, enhanced by a caring faculty and staff who desire the best for PLNU students, results in students that are effectively taught, shaped, and sent into the profession as entry-level Athletic Trainers.