Campus Advising Notes Related to the Athletic Training Major (ATHTR)

1. Criteria for Acceptance into the Athletic Training (ATHTR) Major

To be considered for selection into the ATHTR major, a student must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA* at the time of selection and must have at least a 3.0 average in the ATHTR core courses, which include KINES 135, 202, 231, and 233.

In addition to the GPA criteria specified above, an interview with ATHTR faculty is required as part of the selection process. Interviews occur in early December. Students typically receive notification of the selection decision during the winter break.

Approximately 25 students are admitted into the major each winter break. Therefore, it is important to have a back-up career goal in mind, in case a student is not selected for the ATHTR major.

*While the minimum cumulative GPA required for the ATHTR major is a 2.5, students selected typically have higher than a 3.0 GPA.

ADVISING DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Using the Target GPA feature on eLion, is the minimum GPA realistically attainable, based on the student’s projected record after freshman year?
- Is the student likely to achieve the 3.0 minimum in the core, particularly if they will be taking all 4 core courses in one semester, and that semester is their first at University Park? (It is common for students to show some decline in performance their first semester at University Park.)

2. Athletic Training Program Application

If you have a student interested in the ATHTR major, they must turn in an application which essentially puts them “in the queue” for coursework that should be taken at University Park during the fall semester of their sophomore year. The application can be printed from http://www.hhdev.psu.edu/KINES/undergrad/athletic_training.html

Completing and submitting the ATHTR program application does not mean the student will be selected for entry into the ATHTR major, nor does it commit the student to the ATHTR major. It simply puts them in the queue for the coursework that is part of the ATHTR core. It is best to submit the application as soon as athletic training is identified as a possible career goal.

Students who have completed and submitted the ATHTR program application will receive an email in the spring semester letting them know if a spot in the ATHTR core is available. They must respond by a certain deadline or their space could be lost.
ADVISING DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Is ATHTR an identified goal?
- Does the student understand the profession (see #3 and #4 below)?
- Does the student understand the demands of the major, which include spending 300-400 hours per semester in the training room?

3. ATHTR versus Movement Science for Physical Therapy

Acceptance into many physical therapy graduate programs typically requires coursework in biology, chemistry, psychology, and physics. Some programs require two semesters in these categories and/or have additional requirements.

Some of the courses needed for physical therapy graduate programs are also required for the ATHTR major. These include BIOL 141, CHEM 110+111, PHYS 250+250P, PSYCH 100, and STAT 200. But almost all of the requirements typically needed for allied health graduate programs are already part of the Movement Science Option requirements. These include: BIOL 110, BIOL 141+142, CHEM 110+111, CHEM 112+113, PHYS 250+250P, PHYS 251+251P, PSYCH 100, and STAT 200.

Therefore, Movement Science is the more efficient Kinesiology program for preparation for an allied health graduate program.

A considerable number of credits needed for admission into many allied health graduate programs cannot be applied toward the ATHTR curriculum and will be “extra” work for the ATHTR student.

ADVISING DISCUSSION POINTS:

- As a general rule, if a student never wishes to work as a certified athletic trainer, the ATHTR major is not appropriate. It is highly demanding and time consuming; many students feel like they have a full time job because they spend 300-400 hours per semester in the training room. If a student’s heart is not in ATHTR, then the ATHTR major is not right for them.
- Though some athletic trainers go on to physical therapy school, it is not necessary to first become an athletic trainer to become a physical therapist. So, again, if the student has no desire to ever work as an athletic trainer, but wishes to pursue a career in physical therapy, they will likely fit better under the Movement Science option of the Kinesiology major.
- As part of the new ATHTR application, students are required to shadow an athletic trainer for 25 hours. This helps to ensure adequate understanding of the profession. Students should also be encouraged to observe a physical therapist if they are considering both professional roles.

4. Athletic Training (ATHTR) versus Personal Training

Athletic trainers are different from personal trainers. Athletic trainers rehabilitate, treat, and prevent athletic-related injury and are emergency responders. Personal trainers work with individuals or groups to achieve fitness-related goals. Students who wish to work as personal trainers or strength and conditioning coaches would find a better curricular fit with the Exercise Science option (Berks campus only) of the Kinesiology major.
ADVISING DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Does the student understand the difference between athletic training and personal training?
- As part of the new ATHTR application, students are required to shadow an athletic trainer for 25 hours. This helps to ensure adequate understanding of the profession. Students should also be encouraged to observe a personal trainer/fitness trainer if they are considering both professional roles.

5. Relocating to University Park

KINES 231 and 233 are only offered at University Park, and only during fall semesters. Therefore, students will need to relocate to University Park if they wish to take these courses and compete for a spot in the ATHTR major. **Delaying relocation beyond their sophomore fall will delay graduation by at least one year because after selection into the ATHTR major, a 5-semester prescribed sequence is required.**

If a student is offered a spot in the pre-ATHTR core, they should follow the change-of-campus procedure at their campus. Since it will likely be classified as an early change-of-campus request, students can find details regarding the early change-of-campus process for the CHHD at: [http://www.hhdev.psu.edu/studentservices/change_policy.html](http://www.hhdev.psu.edu/studentservices/change_policy.html).

ADVISING DISCUSSION POINTS:

- If a student relocates to University Park before 5th semester in order to pursue the ATHTR major, they must retain ATHTR core courses throughout the drop/add period for fall semester or the CHHD reserves the right to reassign the student back to their initial campus of enrollment for the spring semester following the early change of campus to University Park, see [Academic Administrative Policy D-5](#).
- Because of the point above, it is critical to discuss this policy with students. If they are uncertain about whether or not they want to pursue ATHTR, then most likely, they are not suited for the major and should not be encouraged to relocate to University Park early to take the pre-ATHTR core. For those who change their minds about ATHTR, the pre-ATHTR core may end up as essentially 9-13 wasted credits.

6. Questions?

On behalf of your advisee, please contact the Department of Kinesiology Advising Center at University Park with questions. It is important that we talk directly with campus advisers so that the information we share can be passed along to your other students. The Department of Kinesiology Advising Center at University Park can be reached at 814-863-4493.