

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

MEMO

To: The UVM Faculty Senate
From: Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair
Date: February 3, 2017
Re: Approval of a proposal for a new Certificate in Physical Activity Promotion in Children and Youth submitted by the College of Arts and Sciences

At its meeting on February 2, 2017, the Curricular Affairs Committee unanimously approved the action recommended in the following memo.

The Curricular Affairs Committee unanimously approved a proposal for a new Certificate in Physical Activity Promotion in Children and Youth (PAPC&Y) submitted by the College of Arts and Sciences. The new minor is a collaboration between faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), the College of Education and Social Services (CESS), and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS). Administratively, it will be housed in the Department of Psychological Sciences. If approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, the program will be offered beginning Fall 2017.

Program Description, Rationale, and Evidence for Demand

The proposed undergraduate Certificate in PAPC&Y will provide undergraduate students with a foundation in the approaches, methods, and techniques for successfully engaging children and youth in physical activity across a range of professional settings. Students in the certificate program will engage in substantive and integrated learning experiences across the disciplines of psychological science, education, and exercise and movement science. The new certificate will also provide students hands-on research experience while assisting with the implementation of a physical activity curriculum to children in local educational settings.

The primary objective of the newly proposed Certificate in PAPC&Y is to use an interdisciplinary approach to augment the skills of students who work or plan to work with children and youth in multiple contexts to implement physical activity programs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Students that complete the program will gain the skills required to facilitate increased opportunities for physical activity in children's lives across a range of settings. It is important to note that this certificate program will not prepare students for careers in Physical Education. Students that inquire about the certificate and express interest in a career as a Physical Education teacher will be advised to pursue that goal through the B.S. in Education (Teaching Endorsement: Physical Education PK – 12).

Currently, obesity and sedentary behaviors of children and adolescents are at epidemic levels in the United States. Individuals involved in monitoring children's well-being (e.g. child care, school, community programs) are all in a position to make an impact. Therefore, it is important to ensure that students preparing to seek employment in these settings have the opportunity to receive training in the appropriate goals, curricula, and evaluation procedures for increasing and evaluating physical activity outcomes in children. In addition, the Vermont Education Quality Standards were recently revised, making physical activity a priority area for those who work in schools even outside the physical education setting:

“Each school shall offer options for students in grades K-12 to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity within or outside of the school day. Physical activity may include recess and movement built into the curriculum, but does not replace physical education classes.” (Vermont Education Quality Standards, p. 6)

This certificate program provides both the implementation and evaluation skills needed in such contexts.

Faculty from the departments of Psychological Science, Education, and Rehabilitation and Movement Sciences developed the proposed Certificate in PAPC&Y in response to growing interest in PSYS 268: Fit Kids Applied Research, a new service-learning course taught by Dr. Betsy Hoza. The course offers undergraduate students a unique educational opportunity to become active in research and gain hands-on experience implementing and investigating the efficacy of a physical activity intervention in children and youth. PSYS 268 currently enrolls students across numerous disciplines, including psychological science, education, and exercise and movement science. The newly proposed certificate offers two tracks – an applied track that focused on implementation, and a research track focused on evaluation of efficacy – and therefore is expected to be of interest to students from a variety of degree programs. (Both tracks are described in more detail in the Curriculum section of this report.)

Relationship to Existing Programs and Impact on Current Programs

Currently, there are no existing minors or undergraduate certificates with the same educational goals as the newly proposed Certificate in PAPC&Y. Because the curriculum of the certificate is primarily composed of existing courses, there is a small amount of overlap in coursework for students pursuing majors in related areas. To meet the intended interdisciplinary requirement of the certificate program, students will not be allowed to meet all certificate requirements (detailed below) within their major department. The program proposers anticipate approximately ten students in the initial year based on expressed interest. Due to the limited expected enrollment and the uniqueness of the new certificate, the proposers do not anticipate any noticeable impact on existing programs.

Curriculum

Completion of the proposed Certificate in PAPC&Y will require a minimum of 15 credits (nine at 100-level or higher). Students will have the option to follow an Applied Track or Research Track within the certificate program. The specific objectives of the Applied Track are to train professionals who can: 1) incorporate developmentally appropriate physical activity into a variety of applied professional settings involving children and youth, and 2) use data at a basic level to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. The specific objectives of the Research Track are to train professionals who can: 1) design an evaluation of a developmentally appropriate physical activity program, and 2) utilize appropriate measures of physical activity and health-related outcomes to evaluate program effectiveness.

Required Courses

Level I Courses (minimum of two courses)		
RMS 095	Movement Science I	3 credits
EDEC 001	Intro to Early Childhood Education	3 credits
EDSP 005	Intro to Spec Education	3 credits
PSYS 150	Developmental Psych: Childhood	3 credits
EDPE 055	Fitness	3 credits
EDPE 166	Kinesiology	3 credits
Level II Courses (minimum of one course for applied track ; minimum of two courses for research track)		
PSYS 168 [‡]	Applied Psychological Research	3 credits
RMS 220 or PSYS 053	Research I Research Methods	3 credits
RMS 295	Physical Activity Assessment in Children and Youth	3 credits (or 4 credits with lab)
Level III Courses (minimum of two courses for applied track; minimum of one course for research track)		
PSYS 268	Fit Kids Applied Research	3 credits
PSYS 269	Fit Kids Applied Research: Special Populations	3 credits
PSYS 295/296	Advanced Fit Kits Applied Research	3 credits

[‡] New course; proposal submitted in CourseLeaf.

A suggestion was made to allow SOC 101 as a substitute for either of the research method courses. The proposers will review the syllabus to determine if SOC 101 is an appropriate addition. The proposers also indicated a willingness to consider courses from other departments that would be suitable for the program.

All existing courses have capacity or the ability increase capacity in order to accommodate students enrolled in the new certificate program. The proposers indicate that special topics courses (RMS 295, PSYS 295/296) will be submitted for permanent numbers in the near future.

Advising

For students that enroll in the certificate with a major in one of the three sponsoring colleges (CAS, CESS, CNHS), academic advising will take place in the home department of each student's major. If students from other units enroll in the program, a secondary advisor will be assigned from within CAS, CESS, or CNHS on a rotating basis per a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget

All existing courses have capacity or the ability increase capacity in order to accommodate students enrolled in the new certificate program. Faculty have room in their workloads to accommodate two of the three new courses. The third course, PSYS 168 Applied Research in the Field, will be taught by Assistant Professor Erin Shoulberg (Psychological Sciences Department). The proposers indicate that the course revenue is expected to cover the cost of Dr. Shoulberg's time, and thus additional financial commitment from the involved departments or colleges is not required. Course offerings will be handled per a MOU established among the three collaborating colleges. The core faculty for this certificate program will meet at least biweekly, and will address any remaining issues related to integrative project supervision or course substitutions.

Evidence of Support

Letters of support were provided by Chairs of the Departments of Psychological Science (John Green), Education (George Salembier), and Rehabilitation and Movement Science (Jeremy Sibold). Additional support letters were provided by the Chair of the CNHS Curriculum Planning Committee (Elizabeth Adams), and the Deans of CAS (William Falls), CNHS (Patricia Prelock), and CESS (Cynthia Gerts-Pepin).

Summary

The newly proposed Certificate in Physical Activity Promotion in Children and Youth is a collaborative effort that spans multiple departments and colleges, and capitalizes on existing courses and resources. It was created to provide students with the opportunity to experience interdisciplinary coursework while building their knowledge in the domain of physical health and wellness. The curriculum includes both service-learning coursework and opportunities for students to engage in research, both of which are high impact practices that improve undergraduate success. The goals and specific objectives of the certificate are well aligned with the missions of the involved departments and colleges, and support the University's initiatives aimed towards advancing interdisciplinary research and enriching students development and experiences. The proposed certificate program is unique in its explicit goal of training students that will pursue careers in a variety of professional disciplines to promote and evaluate effectiveness of physical activity programming for children and youth. It will be a wonderful addition to the University's portfolio of curricular offerings.