

New UW-Parkside Major Prepares Health Care Professionals



Health care professionals are in demand. State and national projections show a 33 percent increase in the need for chiropractors, athletic trainers, and occupational and physical therapists, and a 50 percent jump in physician assistant jobs through 2014. To help meet that demand, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside now offers an applied health sciences (AHS) major.

“During advising, many students expressed interest in pursuing a career such as physical or occupational therapy. Unfortunately, there wasn’t a major that met most of the requirements and prerequisites for entrance into these programs,” said UW-Parkside Health, Physical Education, and Athletic Department Chair Penny Lyter. “The new major meets this need. Parkside already offered the vast majority of courses for such a major, it was just a matter of putting the courses together in a cohesive manner.”

Lyter worked with Bryan Lewis and Carmel Ruffolo of UW-Parkside’s Biological Sciences Department to select courses that meet the educational requirements of graduate and professional schools.

Lewis noted the university’s impressive acceptance rate of close to 90 percent for students applying to professional programs. “Development of the new applied health sciences major draws directly on these strengths to offer our students a degree program that will help them pursue professional health careers,” he said.

Main areas of concentration for the AHS major are athletic training, chiropractic medicine, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and kinesiology/exercise science. The new major also serves students who stop at the bachelor’s degree level, opening career opportunities in general health sciences, entry-level scientific and medical research, and fitness and health promotion.

Designed to help new and current students, university and technical college transfers, practicing professionals with technical degrees, and pre-nursing students, the AHS major provides a solid interdisciplinary and liberal arts foundation.

Only three months after the start of the program, close to 40 students have declared AHS as their major. Ruffolo, who now directs the program, is encouraged by the early interest. “We projected 30 majors by the end of May 2008,” she said. “We have passed our proposed number and we are expecting more students to join the AHS program in the coming spring semester.”

More information is available by visiting www.uwp.edu Keyword: *Admissions*, or by calling 262-595-2355.