School of Nursing and Health Professions Exercise Science Proposal

**I. Introduction: Summary Statement**

The School of Nursing and Health Professions seeks to launch a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science to expand the School’s healthcare degree programs and thereby contribute to Trinity’s Strategic Goals I – Enrollment Development, III – Program Development, and VIII – Service to Students and Community. Trinity, as a comprehensive university committed to offering degree programs that integrate liberal learning with professional education, launched its fourth academic unit – the School of Nursing and Health Professions - in August, 2010. Through its present degree offering, Nursing, as well as future undergraduate and graduate degree programs, the School of Nursing and Health Professions seeks to educate healthcare professionals prepared to provide access and equitable care to the people of the greater Washington area. The BS in Exercise Science provides another health care program whereby Trinity graduates will meet the health care needs of the community. The BS in Exercise Science is designed to serve undergraduate students entering the College of Arts and Sciences. These graduates will be prepared to address the needs of active individuals while also capable of enrolling in graduate degree health care programs in the rehabilitative sciences.

**II. Statement of Need**

Trinity’s revised goal statement for Strategic Goal 1: Enrollment states that by 2015 Trinity will enroll 3000 students in degree programs with at least 300 students enrolled in the School of Nursing and Health Professions. While Trinity’s Nursing Program has experienced enrollment growth over the last three years, increasing from 11 students in 2007 to 119 students in Fall 2010, further efforts are required to maximize Trinity’s potential healthcare impact in the greater Washington area. For Trinity to participate in the broader scope of healthcare in Washington, it is essential that the institution develop other degree programs.

Program areas identified to serve the immediate Trinity enrollment growth goal, Trinity’s current as well as prospective students’ interest in helping professions, and Trinity’s partners, the National Rehab Hospital and Washington Hospital Center include an Exercise Science Bachelors degree; an Occupational Therapy Masters degree; and a Speech Pathology Masters degree. A Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science, the focus of this proposal, will prepare students with the necessary undergraduate pre-requisite coursework to enter graduate level rehabilitative science programs. In addition, earning an Exercise Science degree will give graduates a strong liberal arts foundation upon which to be employed as personal trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, or cardiac rehabilitation specialists.

Offering the Exercise Science program of study allows Trinity help the District of Columbia meet its need for a wider array of health care providers. As an undergraduate degree program that prepares graduates for work as well as graduate education, the Exercise Science Program will help Trinity address the areas shortage of health care providers, particularly in the areas of rehabilitation science such as occupational and physical therapy as well as speech pathology. In addition, adding the Exercise Science program will help Trinity meet students’ needs for those who desire other health care options in addition to the already successful nursing program. Anecdotal reports from Trinity admission counselors indicate a demonstrated student interest in multiple health care careers. The Exercise Science Program offers students a glide path to health care careers at the baccalaureate and graduate degree levels.

**III. Detailed Description of the Actual Program**

To provide students interested in healthcare careers in addition to nursing, the School of Nursing and Health Professions projects to add one program per year over the next three years. The first program to be launched in Fall 2011 will be a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science. The Exercise Science major focuses on female undergraduate students entering the College of Arts and Sciences either through freshman entry or transfer. The Exercise Science program will equip graduates to work as fitness instructors, fitness directors, or cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialists; pursue a career as a strength coach; enter graduate studies in athletic training, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech pathology; as well as choose a career path toward a doctoral research degree.

This program of study is targeted to undergraduate female students enrolled or seeking admittance to the College of Arts and Sciences who seek a career in the health and wellness industry or who desire to pursue graduate education in the healthcare professions and/or research. The Exercise Science Program will provide traditional day programming. Programmatic outcomes for the Exercise Science Program include:

* Graduate at least 30 students per year
* Demonstrate at least 80% proficiency on programmatic student learning outcomes
* Show a combined employment and graduate study enrollment rate of 90% within 1 year of graduation
* Demonstrate a 95% satisfaction rate on employer surveys

The specific outline of the Exercise Science Program is included in Appendix A. The course descriptions for new courses in the program are outlined in Appendix B.

**IV. Financial Justification**

For the Exercise Science Program, the cost of the equipment to outfit the laboratory space and provide necessary fitness equipment could run over $100,000, however, after discussions with Becky Vuksta, almost two-thirds of these costs would be in kind at the Trinity Center. Strength, cardiovascular, agility, and balance training equipment is available at the Trinity Center. The Exercise Science Program could utilize these spaces in addition to the pool by scheduling classes outside the Center’s busy times before 9:00AM and between 4:30-8PM. Additionally, we plan to teach students basic techniques in areas, such as body mass index testing, while seeking fieldtrips to other universities such as Catholic University and George Washington University to view techniques with advanced equipment such as the BodPod and underwater weight tanks.

The Cardiopulmonary Mannequins and AED Trainers are a necessary expense to train our students in appropriate CPR and first aid, yet these pieces of equipment could be shared with the Trinity Office of Continuing Education to provide CPR training to nursing students and area health care professionals at a cost. Nursing students at Trinity presently go elsewhere to get their required CPR training. And while hospitals generally provide CPR training in house, we may provide this outreach to coaches, athletic trainers and other health professionals who must maintain CPR credentials for their professional certifications. Consistent with Trinity’s Strategic Goal III Service to Students and Community, we could also offer basic CPR to the general public at a nominal fee.

In addition to possible continuing education offerings designed in collaboration between the Exercise Science Program and the Office of Continuing Education, the addition of this undergraduate degree program should contribute an additional 75-100 new student to Trinity’s enrollment growth. This degree program will contribute to the enrollment growth at the undergraduate level and will prepare students to enter graduate education programs in the future thereby further adding to Trinity’s growth while providing opportunities for interdisciplinary health care education.

**V. Larger Trinity Context - "Boilerplate" About Program and Trinity**

The launching of the School of Nursing and Health Professions enhances Trinity’s visibility in educating health care professionals to service the greater Washington, DC area. With the addition of the Exercise Science Program, students attending Trinity will have another health care career option in addition to the existing nursing program adding other mechanisms by which to serve our local community.

In addition to the Nursing Program, the Exercise Science Program will contribute to the School of Nursing and Health Professions goals of:

* Providing health care career access opportunities to students from underrepresented groups, thereby increasing the diversity of health care providers.
* Educating students in multiple health care fields of interest to the local community thus contributing to Trinity’s mission by addressing social justice and inequality aspects of local, national, and global health care.
* Contributing to Trinity’s enrollment growth and vision for a new academic center.
* Educating students in various healthcare disciplines allowing Trinity to build interdisciplinary partnerships for community service options.

**VI. Outcomes and Assessment**

The Exercise Science Program will be evaluated on a number of elements as they relate to the three Trinity Strategic Goals of I- Enrollment Growth; III – Program Development; and VIII – Service to Students and Community.

Programmatic assessment of the Exercise Science Program will occur on a three-year cycle, with data collection occurring on an annual basis. Elements of the program assessment will include student performance outcomes as they relate to Trinity undergraduate outcomes, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, graduation rates, and employment dates. In addition, assessment of this new program initiative will be assessed on:

1. Strategic Enrollment (Trinity Strategic Goal 1): By Spring 2012, the Exercise Science Program will add 50 students to the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

2. Program Development (Trinity Strategic Goal 3): Provide Trinity undergraduate students with a second allied health degree glide path by:

a. Fully launch the Exercise Science Program by January, 2013.  
 b. Hire at two new full-time faculty  
 c. Establish at least 15 Exercise Science externship sites  
  
3. Quality Outcomes and Performance Indicators (Trinity Strategic Goal 9): Demonstrate student institutional and programmatic learning outcomes in each program within the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

* 1. The Exercise Science Program will begin in Fall 2011. Formative assessments demonstrating students’ ability to:
     1. Critique published literature at 70% accuracy as determined on a programmatic rubric
     2. Write an annotated bibliography that scores a 3 of 5 on a programmatic rubric
  2. Exercise Science summative assessments will include:
     1. Students will critique published literature at 90% accuracy as determined on a programmatic rubric
     2. Score 4 of 5 on a programmatic rubric for a written annotated bibliography
     3. Outline a client exercise prescription program with 90% accuracy, including all safety considerations

**VII. Conclusion**

Implementation of the undergraduate Exercise Science Program will contribute to three Trinity Strategic Goals (Goal I – Enrollment; Goal III – Program Development; Goal VIII – Service to Students and Community). The program will provide undergraduate students with a second health care degree program of study while increasing Trinity’s opportunity to serve its students’ desire for more health care career options as well as our community partners’ need for highly educated health care professionals.