

Approved by the Board of Trustees
November 12, 2020

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Board Meeting
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ESTABLISH THE DOCTOR OF CLINICAL EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY, COLLEGE
OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES, CHICAGO

Action: Establish the Doctor of Clinical Exercise Physiology, College of Applied Health Sciences

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Chicago Senate recommends approval of a proposal from the College of Applied Health Sciences to establish the Doctor of Clinical Exercise Physiology.

Clinical Exercise Physiologists (CEPs) are healthcare professionals who work with persons with chronic diseases, where exercise training has been shown to be of therapeutic benefit, including, but not limited to, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease, and metabolic disorders. CEPs typically hold a bachelor's or master's degree in exercise science or related fields and have a professional certification from a national organization, such as the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) or the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR). With the exception of Louisiana, states do not require practitioners to be licensed or obtain private certifications. Rather, in order to deliver billable services, CEPs must practice under the supervision of a physician and bill through a physician's National Provider Identification

number. Additionally, the antiquated CEP training model disproportionately focuses on the application of exercise services to patients with cardiovascular disease, with less attention given to other prevalent non-communicable diseases. These issues have contributed to reduced autonomy among licensed allied health professionals, stunted the growth of the CEP profession, and prevented CEPs from practicing and billing independently.

Accordingly, there is a growing interest in finding unique pathways to elevate the profession. The establishment of professional doctorate programs is seen as an opportunity to reimagine the delivery of CEP services and to move towards a more autonomous profession. The leaders of nationally recognized CEP programs are considering or initiating these efforts, and national and regional organizations, including the ACSM, the Clinical Exercise Physiology Association, and the Illinois Society for Cardiopulmonary Health and Rehabilitation, have endorsed the development of a professional doctorate.

Housed in the UIC Department of Physical Therapy, the degree will be the first doctorate of its kind in the country and world. It will provide didactic and clinical training opportunities designed to elevate professional preparation beyond what is currently available for students who aspire to practice as clinical exercise physiologists. The degree will serve as a continuation of the learning provided via master's degrees in CEP or like disciplines (e.g., kinesiology, exercise physiology, or exercise science). A master's degree will be required for admission, as will be at least 100 hours of experience

working in a clinical setting (e.g., in relation to cardiac or pulmonary rehabilitation, exercise stress testing, or community wellness).

The degree is comprised of 15 required, face-to-face courses, in addition to a total of 50 to 54 credit hours from the master's degree. The department estimates eight students would enroll in the first year, and 20 students per year would enroll once the program is fully implemented.

The department's budget will be adequate to support the new degree when fully implemented. One clinical teaching faculty member will be hired during the first year of the program to assist with teaching new courses. Current facilities and library resources are adequate to support the program.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.