

Bachelor of Science in Applied Health Studies

Majors Reviewed:

- *Applied Health Studies – via Distance Education (BDA)*
- *Applied Health Studies (BAH)*
- *Applied Health Studies – Emergency Medical (BAE)*
- *Applied Health Studies – Surgical Technology (BAG)*
- *Applied Health Studies – Occupational Therapy Assistant (BAO)*
- *Applied Health Studies – Radiography (BAR)*
- *Applied Health Studies – Exercise Science (BAX)*

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The Bachelor of Science in Applied Health Studies is a unique degree-completion program that was designed to allow credentialed or soon-to-be-credentialed health care providers to earn a bachelor's degree with minimal or no loss of credit for their professional coursework. The first degree was granted in December 1999, and the program continues to steadily gain recognition. Since the last review, the program continues to grow slowly and steadily in terms of enrollment (from 138 in-program students in 2012 to the current in-program count of 159 students in Spring 2016), generating 1,341 credit hours in 2015 – which is an increase over every year since 2011. The Graduate Survey shows a strong positive placement rate of 100% being employed full time in their “field of study or preferred field”. There is a low level of competition from similar programs.

The program currently consists of 129 credits over eight semesters, which can be completed via distance education either full-time or part-time to accommodate students' work schedules. Six in-program major codes and one standalone pre-major code currently compose the Applied Health Studies major. This program provides the 2+2 option for the College's current allied health degree students who are either still in program or graduated, and who desire to pursue a bachelor's degree. In this way, the program serves the following Penn College programs: Occupational Therapy Assistant, Radiography, Surgical Technology, Exercise Science, and Paramedic. The program currently employs two full-time faculty members, Dr. Tina Evans, LAT (department head) and Dr. Michael Covone, RT(R), CT. Both are experienced educators and clinicians, possessing terminal degrees. The department head oversees an assessment plan which includes a method of evaluation for each of the required courses and identifies where each of the program goals are addressed within the curriculum. The program faculty are essential in designing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating the curriculum.

The Applied Health Studies program is a fiscally successful program at the College, congruent with the Mission of the School of Health Sciences and of the College. Comprehensive, hands-on technical education at the bachelor's level is provided, valuing diversity and lifelong learning as students are prepared for professional success in the healthcare disciplines. The program uses limited on-campus facilities, which allows it to operate at a relatively low cost, with unlimited potential for expansion since the distance education platform is utilized to teach the majority of the required and elective courses. The largest potential growth of this program would come from cultivating additional articulation agreements with other institutions to increase the number of transfer students into the online program (BAH). Thus, this program has high potential for future enrollment.

Recommendations as a result of this review include:

- Revise and update the program goals. Work will begin in May 2016, with a goal of submitting the revision to curriculum committee by no later than December 2016. No budgetary impact.
- Revise and update the required student outcomes for HTH310, *Health Issues and Transitions*, and HTH447, *Health and Human Services Public Policy Development*. In Fall 2016, Dr. Evans will lead this process with those who most commonly teach these courses. The goal is to submit the revisions to curriculum committee by no later than December 2016. No budgetary impact.
- With assistance from the school dean and the College's manager of academic marketing, initiate specific marketing recommendations, many of which came from a marketing meeting held in April 2016. The target deadline is December 2016. Unknown budgetary impact at this time. Some suggestions towards this plan include:

- Market the program directly to local and regional hospital systems to create a greater awareness
- Reach out directly to additional healthcare systems who are already sending us students to train. This can be a strong source of new students and also a potential source of new healthcare system-sponsored scholarships for current students.
- Advertise in relevant professional journals and professional societies (Ex: American Society of Radiologic Technologists, OT Advance, RT Advance, PA Society of Radiologist Technologists, etc.)
- Create a stronger visitation plan to speak to students at articulated schools
- Collect testimonials from alumni to use in marketing efforts, including alumni profiles from LinkedIn
- Create a 60-second video for the program, and/or for specific classes (e.g., capstone)
- Actively pursue articulation agreements with institutions that have shown recent interest.
- Consider ways to eliminate some of the 129 required credits in an effort to make the program more attractive to prospective students. To be discussed in department meetings in Fall 2016.