New Degree Summary Proposal (White Paper)

Degree name: Master of Science (M.S.) Degree in Applied Kinesiology

Department: Health and Human Performance

College: Health Sciences

1. **Strategic alignment.** Cite specific examples of how the program aligns to the DSU strategic plan, mission, and goals. Are there aspects that make the proposed program unique or enable it to stand out from similar programs? How?

   **Response:**
   - In the 2020 Strategic Plan, Status to Stature, Goal number 2 is to: "**Broaden** and enhance academic programs to facilitate **growth**."
   - The current proposal aligns specifically with the supporting strategy number 1 under that goal: "**Develop and approve master's degrees** and new baccalaureate majors."
   - The proposed program is an M.S. in Applied Kinesiology, featuring two concentrations: one in Exercise Science and one in Kinesiology for Special Populations. The unique features of the proposed programs include (a) their aim toward in-service physical educators, special education teachers, aging and at-risk instructors, and athletic coaches, (b) their benefit to students seeking to continue on to terminal or professional degrees upon graduation, (c) their positioning of students to make career advancement or to qualify for certified positions that are best employable with advanced degrees, and (d) the opportunity to grow DSU as a center for sport science and recreation and sporting opportunities for special populations.

2. **External demand.** What need(s) will this program help fulfill for our DSU footprint and stakeholders in Washington County? What impact would the program have on existing programs in the state? Bordering states? Justify how projected employment opportunities are reasonable. Include both local and national statistics on potential employment of graduates. Justify how the program will meet projected future demand, growth, and economic trends. How?

   **Response:**
   - Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California have continued growth in the education, fitness and sport industries, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
   - For example, the number of teachers who also qualify to coach athletics in secondary education settings is expected to grow at 25% nationally, and 26% in Utah from now until 2026.
   - Postsecondary instructors and coaches requiring master’s degrees are expected to increase in number by 13% nationally and 15% in Utah.
   - The number of clinical physiologists holding master’s degrees is increasing and is projected to grow by 10% nationally.
   - A master’s degree in Kinesiology is a pathway to other allied health professions such as Physical Therapy (34% growth nationally, 41% Utah) and Occupational Therapy (26% growth nationally, 32% Utah).
   - These data all eclipse the average job growth of 7% projected for all occupation during the same time period.
   - Though the data for in-service teachers and coaches wanting to earn master’s degrees in applied kinesiology or similar disciplines were not as readily available, it is reasonable to expect a trend of growth in this group as well, as they find themselves needing to secure advancements or new opportunities. In-service teachers can increase their position on the career ladder by obtaining a master’s degree, thus increasing their yearly salary.
   - It is also reasonable to predict a growth in the need for scientific degrees from which students can move to terminal degree programs.
   - Therefore, the proposed programs herein are directed at (a) educators and coaches who wish to earn an advanced degree for employment and promotion opportunity, (b) people who wish to gain
expertise to serve special populations, and (c) students who will engage in scientific inquiry and go on to terminal degrees, allied health professions, or work in the exercise industry equipped with an advanced degree.

- SUU’s has an online master’s degree in Sport Conditioning and Performance, but the proposed programs differ in two important ways: (a) the proposed exercise science concentration is a science-based research degree, and (b) The proposed Applied Kinesiology degree is more closely related to pedagogy and coaching skills. In contrast to the SUU Sports Conditioning and Performance degree, the proposed DSU degree will focus more on the development of knowledge and skills to teach, coach, and promote physical activity to more diverse populations, including young children, adolescents, aging and at-risk adults, and individuals with cognitive, sensory, and orthopedic impairment. This degree will facilitate the attainment of specialized credentials needed for positions to work with these special populations.

- Our degree is meant to be delivered face-to-face, but the special populations track could be adapted for online delivery if it is deemed that is better and/or reaches more people.

3. **Internal demand.** What is the enrollment and graduation outlook over the next two, five and ten years? State compelling evidence of student demand at the county, state, national, international levels. Are there other DSU programs (including GE) that will rely on this program for instruction and support? Are there other internal demand factors this program will help meet?

Response:

- Enrollment and graduation rates for these programs vary greatly across states and institutions, and data for a concentration as unique as the special populations track are so-far impossible to obtain. Typically, though, the most similar programs at similarly-sized institutions have as many as 15 to 20 students in them (so, perhaps a total of 30-40 total students for both emphases).
- A reasonable goal is to have 10 students in each track within the first two years.
- Graduation rates within two years vary widely from institution to institution, from 66% to 74%. When taken out to a four year period to graduation, the rates typically rise to as high as 85%.
- Students that begin their academic careers at DSU will have the opportunity to leave with a master’s degree. Additionally, they have an alternative route toward professional schools if they are not immediately admitted upon graduation with their baccalaureate degree. Students who demonstrate to admissions officers at PT and OT schools that they are engaged in scientific training and research, or focused on movement in special populations (particularly individuals with cognitive, sensory, or orthopedic impairment) often do better in their next round of applications.
- Though graduation and attrition rates can be expected to remain steady over the next five to ten years (as they seem to have for the previous five to ten years), it is probable, given the increasing employment opportunities associated with the master’s degree, that applications to the program will increase over that time, allowing for increasingly qualified candidates admitted.
- An important consideration in the implementation of the program will be the existence of human performance labs which will involve graduate students in research and laboratory instrumentation experiences. Though this is not primarily the mission of the university, it will be a natural extension of the training of graduate students and will lend credibility to the program while lending employability and marketable expertise to graduates.

4. **Quality/Costs of the program/Future costs.** What costs will be incurred over the next two, five, and ten years? What will be the cost per student credit hour? Justify how the costs and budgets will be sustainable for potential future program growth and expansion? Are there adequate plans for student support/assistantships? Will the current and future faculty be able to deliver a quality program? To support and appropriately instruct the projected student enrollment? Why? What are the credentials and reputation of the faculty? Are there adequate equipment, facilities (research space), & library resources? Is the
proposed administration for the program appropriate and adequate? What other factors will influence quality?

Response:
- We recommend the hiring of two new faculty to support these programs in the face of the existence of the undergraduate exercise science programs: one for the Special Populations emphasis and one for Exercise Science. This will be the largest cost of the program.
- The sustainability of the program lies in the growing demand for both programs of study.
- Through campus development, graduate students can eventually be partially supported by assistantships. Students working in the special populations concentration will be needed for local events at which they may be able to work or volunteer. We expect that with the advent of the program, organizing bodies for events like Special Olympics, as well as other specialized events like the World Senior Games will want to bring more events and opportunities to the Saint George area. That is, given its climate, beauty, population, and now a program of support and study for their groups, Saint George will certainly attract more such events and expositions.
- The research and laboratory experiences will be available thanks to the opening of human performance labs, which are already planned and under construction. The use of these labs by graduate students is appropriate to the lab quality and mission. The work of graduate students will most often support and compliment the ongoing scholarly work of faculty.

5. Revenue and other resources generated by the program. What revenues (tuition, grants, other) will this program generate in two, five, and ten years? What kind of grants are anticipated? Is there adequate support for research grants? Other sources of revenue?

Response:
- Graduate tuition will be generated by this program, which, though not yet determined, is assumed to be differentially greater than undergraduate tuition.
- As a premier site on campus, the human performance center will feature publicly-visible labs. The marketing of the work performed in them by excellent graduate students promotes university development and fundraising.
- This will be particularly true for the special populations work. Much of it will also occur in the new Human Performance Center. Donors and sponsors who wish to fund work that expands movement and recreation for diverse groups such as those previously listed will have a highly visible and academically defined home for their support.
- Analysis services that can be marketed and sold to the public and athletic entities will be supported by graduate students.
- Contract and grant research work by faculty in the labs will be supported by graduate students, and they would be compensated accordingly.

6. Research/program design/other. Will this program create research and creative opportunities for our faculty and students? How will these research opportunities help our faculty? Students? Is the program a partnership or collaboration with a private organization, USHE or other institution, or standalone? What are the merits of it being a partnership or standalone? What is the percentage of face-to-face, online, hybrid, evening, or weekend time spent in this program? What other instructional innovations/delivery methods are being proposed for this program? Are there other opportunities that this program will create? Develop new markets? How will the program adapt to changes in technology, trends, student populations, and/or employer needs?

Response:
- The research and creative opportunities associated with this program come from the access to lab experiences. Graduate studies allow for more advanced projects and research training.
• The research that can be done in the special populations concentration will be novel and unique in the state, as it applies to pedagogy and recreation for those groups. It is work that should be done, and the best place to do it is at Dixie State.
• The M.S. program is intended for face-to-face delivery. The schedule of classes may include evening courses, especially in the special populations emphasis, to accommodate working professionals. Offering much the special populations program online should be discussed, as this may be the best way to serve those for whom it is most valuable.
• Applications to both programs will include GRE scores, letters of recommendation, and GPA information. The waiving of GRE scores can be discussed, particularly in the event of the admission of a DSU graduate who is already known to the department.