

Baccalaureate Core: Fitness Skill Requirement Adjustment

As the population ages, there is a national push to focus on prevention of health-related chronic diseases (NPAP, 2014; USDHHS, 2014). Instilling positive health habits early in life are beneficial for one's overall health and wellbeing, quality of life, and disease prevention. The USDHHS (2014) focuses on six main areas for prevention to improve the health of all Americans: Exercise & Fitness; Diet, Nutrition & Eating Right; Healthy Lifestyle; Vaccinations/Immunizations; Health Screenings; and The Environment and Your Health. Among the college aged population, research has shown an upward trend in obesity levels, hypertension, depression, and anxiety (Novotney, 2014; Sparling, 2007). The most current data states that only 39.55% of American colleges and universities have physical education requirements (Cardinal, Sorensen, & Cardinal, 2012). With the increase in hypokinetic diseases and a decline in physical activity-based curriculum at the college level, it is of the utmost importance to strive for solutions that will positively affect the health and wellbeing of college students. Oregon State University has been at the forefront in higher education by building health and wellbeing into the college experience through a Fitness requirement for all of its undergraduates. With a focus on Health and Wellbeing in Oregon State University's strategic plan 3.0, it is imperative that we continue to provide a physical activity requirement to students to continue instilling the value of positive health habits on one's overall quality of life, cognitive development, and success.

The Baccalaureate Core Fitness requirement for students to graduate Oregon State University consists of two components: A Lifetime Fitness for Health course (HHS 231) and a Physical Activity Course (PAC) of their choice. HHS 231 has traditionally served as a lecture course (2 credits) providing students with essential skills and strategies to implement in their lives in promotion of life-long health and wellness. Designed to facilitate the development of positive health behaviors in physical activity and nutrition, HHS 231 teaches students self-awareness and strategies to initiate these behaviors and creates the foundation for healthy habits they can continue to develop throughout their time at OSU. To foster student success in adopting and sustaining health behaviors aligned with their personal interests and needs, HHS 231 intentionally intersects and collaborates with many programs and resources on campus that support positive health behaviors. Some previous collaborations of the HHS program are with Student Health Services, Physical Activity Courses (PAC) program, Healthy Campus Initiative, Academic Success Center, Dixon Recreation Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, University Housing and Dining, and MU Retail Food Service.

PAC classes serve roughly 18,000 student registrations a year. The courses have functioned to support students' exercise, fitness, and skill acquisition. More recently PAC courses have broadened their function to providing life skills beyond physical activity. Efforts have been made to support leadership development, mental wellness, interpersonal communication development, and safety preparation within the physical activity courses. PAC has also expanded into e-campus courses and looks to add additional courses. One of the uniqueness's and strengths of PAC is the diversity of offerings, teaching activity courses in seven different physical activity domains: Individual Sport, Dance & Social Dance, Team Sport, Aquatics, Mind/Body/Marital Arts, Outdoor Recreation and Education, and Aerobics & Fitness. Through PAC's growth on campus, it has partnered to deliver courses with Dixon Recreation Center, Memorial Union, and Athletics.

Up until 2009, the HHS lecture course was taken concurrently with an HHS laboratory course. However due to limited course offerings for the HHS lab courses and the continued growth, diversity and quality programming within PAC, the concurrent HHS lecture/lab link was severed and OSU students could take a PAC class instead of the HHS lab at any time throughout their university education. Currently PAC serves as the (1) credit laboratory experience in combination with HHS, providing skills in a wide array of different physical activities. However, the two have not directly had curricular alignment or same term enrollment. This proposal would seek to address three significant areas for improvement in programming, delivery, and student success:

- 1) Change the Fitness Category to a Physical Activity and Health requirement.
- 2) Link HHS & PAC curricularly & concurrently.
- 3) Make HHS & PAC combination a first year requirement.

1) Name Change to Physical Activity and Health

Changing the Fitness Category to a Physical Activity and Health requirement would provide more inclusive learning opportunities for students. Current fitness principles may be the intended outcome for life-long health because of the multiple benefits from participation (CDC, 2014), but can be less accessible to non-exercisers. A change to physical activity and health, would allow all physical activity, exercise, and fitness included to be addressed within the category as well as expand to other health-related components such as nutrition or stress management for college students. This change in programming would align with national guidelines for prevention and physical activity and health promotion while also being more inclusive of all students. Additionally, the physical activity and health skills would provide different access points and skill level classes for students wherever they may be on the physical activity and health spectrum.

To address students' individual uniqueness, the PAC courses would be further diversified into (5) themed concept areas: Nutrition, Mindfulness Practices, Fitness and Physical Activity, Health Promotion, and Certifications/Training/Development (see Appendix A). This would provide students choice in their selection of Physical Activity and Health skills. Students would be required to meet several overall objectives between the two programs, as well as specific objectives unique to their selected themed area (Appendix B). These unique learning outcomes would exist in relations to some form of physical activity emphasizing holistic and balanced health promotion for college students.

2) Link HHS & PAC curricularly & concurrently.

Linking HHS & PAC curricularly and concurrently has many benefits. Research found that student enrolled concurrently in a lab during a single term resulted in a 5.5% increase in their final grade. Even more significant was that nontraditional students enrolled in labs did 21.1% better than nontraditional students enrolled only in the lecture (Nelson, Huysken, & Kilibarda, 2010). Additionally, active learning strategies and experiential learning is an essential aspect of putting health knowledge into practice. Large lecture classes combined with laboratory (PAC) experiences create ways for students to personally engage with the scientific course material in a practical and applicable way (Hanover, 2010). The combination of experimental or laboratory learning also fosters greater interaction and opportunities to meet in smaller groups to practice health behaviors (Hanover, 2010).

PAC classes provide the behavioral and action-oriented tools for students to learn the physical activity and health skills that are applicable and personal to their current stage of life.

Concurrent lecture and laboratory classes will develop skills related to goal setting, healthy eating, personal program design, and consistent and realistic physical activity while also being accountable for their behaviors. Previous research stated that after the completion of similar personal wellness courses, individuals identify positive attitude changes towards physical activity and exercise (Mack & Shaddox, 2004). A randomized control trial found that undergraduate's personal experience in physical activity promotion and goal setting was positive for future PA promotion and behaviors (Cooke, Tully, Cupples, E, & J, 2013). Additionally, students who are engaged in physical activity classes in college are more likely to remain active across the lifespan (Cardinal et al., 2012). A closer curricular alignment also provides potential research opportunities for long term of individuals' participation in physical activity and health behaviors years after a student completes HHS & PAC at Oregon State University.

3) Make HHS & PAC combination a first year requirement.

Providing a transformative educational experience for all learners is Goal 1 in OSU's Strategic Plan 3.0. The Baccalaureate (Bacc) Core first year skills requirement was designed and implemented to provide entering students a foundation for academic success and achievement of the Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates of OSU and to successfully initiate their transformative educational experience. Of these five courses, three courses (Writing I, Mathematics, and Oral Communication) require that students have taken and completed the course satisfactorily in the first 45 hours of OSU while Writing II must be taken within the first 90 OSU generated credits. Currently the Fitness skills category is the only skills requirement that is not included in the first 45 credits. Given that this skills category aligns and contributes towards academic success and achievement of the Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates of OSU and promotes healthy behaviors with regards to physical activity and nutrition behaviors, the new Physical Activity and Health Skills category should be included in the first 45 OSU generated credits. This skills course also makes strong contributions towards the achievement of the Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates of OSU by further enhancing the educational experience of all learners through the promotion of positive health behaviors and engaging students in their health and wellbeing in a college setting. In addition, it uniquely contributes to one of the specific strategies for achieving the goal of a health and wellbeing:

Enhance our comprehensive Healthy Campus Initiative, caring about the health and well--- being of students, faculty and staff. Provide programs and resources to support a healthy campus commitment as a foundation for academic and life success.

Currently the majority of the students enrolled in HHS 231 are first year students, however if included as part of the Bacc Core first year skills requirement, the course could specifically tailor content and curriculum while emphasizing application in the OSU learning community. During the fall 2014 term, 90% of students in HHS 231 were first year students (30% had transfer credits from another institution) while 1235 first year students were enrolled in PAC classes (See Appendix C). Requiring successful completion of the Physical Activity and Health Skills course during the first year would ensure students gain essential learning outcomes and become networked with OSU's Healthy Campus Initiative early in their academic experiences, thereby setting their foundation for academic and life success.

Undergraduate college students are at a crucial point in the development of significant health behaviors, most notably related to physical activity, dietary intake, and psychological well-

--being. During the transition from high school to college, physical activity declines 62.5% and only 50.1% of college students meet exercise recommendations (ACHA, 2013; Cullen et al., 1999). College students eat 5.6% of the daily recommendation of fruits and vegetables while more specifically Oregon State students consume only 4.5 servings per day (recommendation is 5-6 servings per day) (ACHA, 2013; Li et al., 2010). Moreover, freshman students struggle with nutrition choices as they transition to independent living (Lafontaine, Neisen, & Parsons, 2006).

Healthy behaviors implemented during college, such as physical activity and proper nutrition, have been shown to remain consistent and stable after graduation (Sparling & Snow, 2002). Public health researchers note that college level Lifetime Fitness for Health curricula represents the last opportunity to shape physical activity and nutrition habits for students entering adulthood (Sparling, 2003). Psychological wellbeing and stress management strategies introduced within HHS 231 are continually integrated within the physical activity and health skills component and foster the concept of flourishing within the learning communities. PAC classes reinforce stress management techniques such as exercise for relaxation, flexibility training, and cognitive development through exercise. Combined with the OSU flourishing initiative in other spheres of the student experience (residence, advising, co-curriculum, and support services), the Physical Activity and Health category offer a significant opportunity to further enhance the experience of students during their first year.

In achieving these student--learning outcomes, the physical activity and health component facilitates positive behavior change by developing skills to achieve and maintain their health and wellbeing which intersects with OSU's Comprehensive Learning Goals and student's academic success (Ansari & Stock, 2010). The physical activity and health skill courses are foundational components for first--year students as they transition into adulthood and initiate health behaviors that can impact long-- term wellness and health. Taking advantage of this critical time to educate students on the importance of choosing positive physical activity, nutrition, and stress management behaviors are crucial for improving the health and wellness of OSU students and forging their link to the Healthy Campus Initiative. We propose that the Physical Activity and Health Skill courses be incorporated into the Bacc Core FYE, for it teaches fundamental skills for first--year students while intentionally integrating aspects of health and wellbeing into their current behaviors empowering them to flourish throughout their time at Oregon State University.

Conclusion

Improving human health and wellness has been recognized as a distinguished area for the Strategic Plan 3.0, these programs seek to improve and align their programming delivery to help meet this goal for the university. Updating and aligning our curriculum to be delivered as a first year skills requirement will also help create the transformational learning experiences that Oregon State University. The proposed changes will serve as a benchmark for continued improvement and assessment in these programming areas. By more closely integrating and aligning the HHS and PAC program through the Bacc Core requirement, we as an institution will better prepare our graduates for the next phase in their life.

Lastly, to successfully transition these programs into the new curricular design, an implementation plan has been identified to complete the full integrations of the HHS and PAC programs in several phases (See Appendix D). This will allow the programs to make adjustments as needed and to involve stakeholders in the implementation process as it occurs. A phased plan will also allow the programs to examine each of the challenges associated with the transition both in the curriculum and logistics of delivery, and be able to adequately address these challenges as they present.

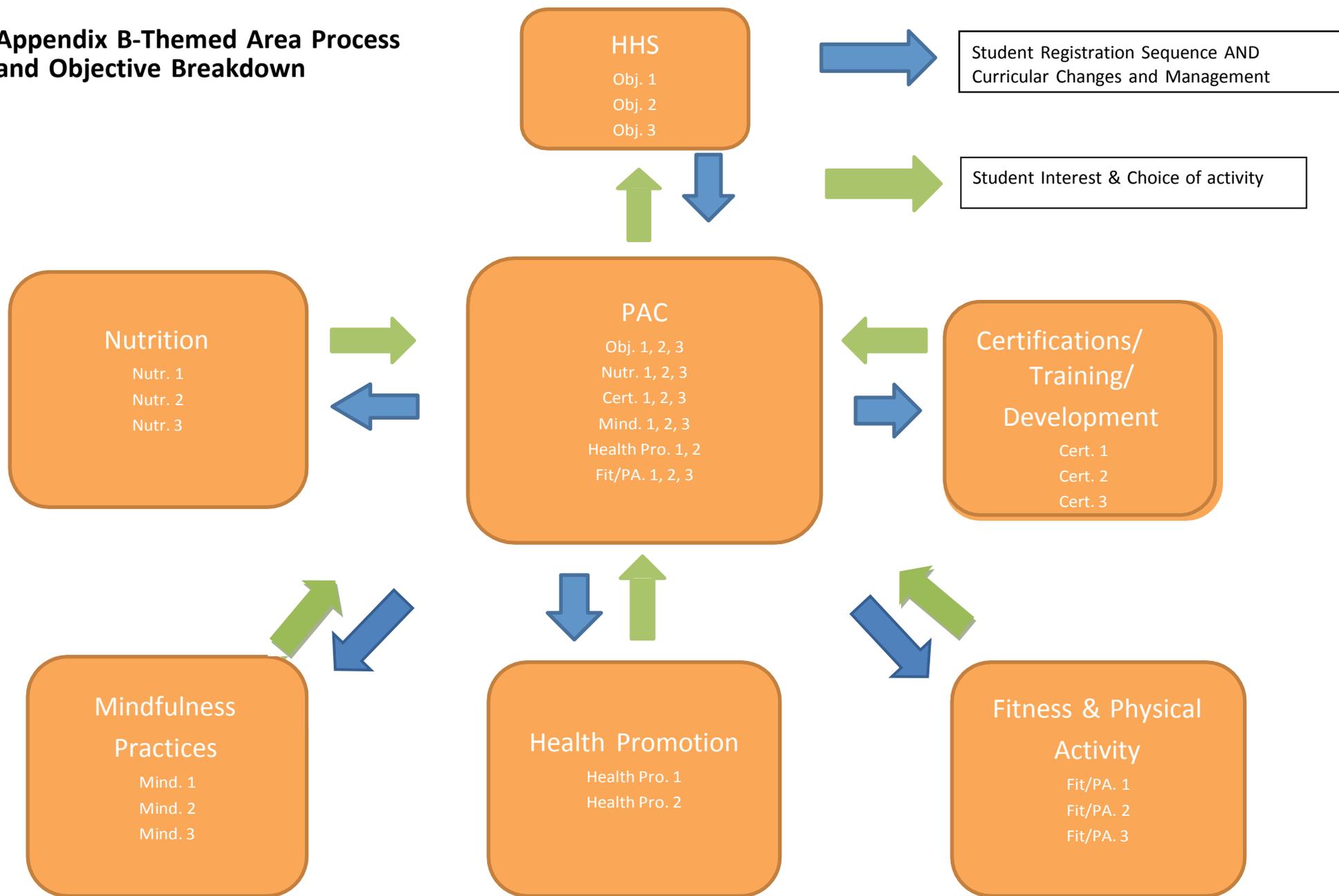
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Appendix A-PAC Themed Areas



Appendix B-Themed Area Process and Objective Breakdown



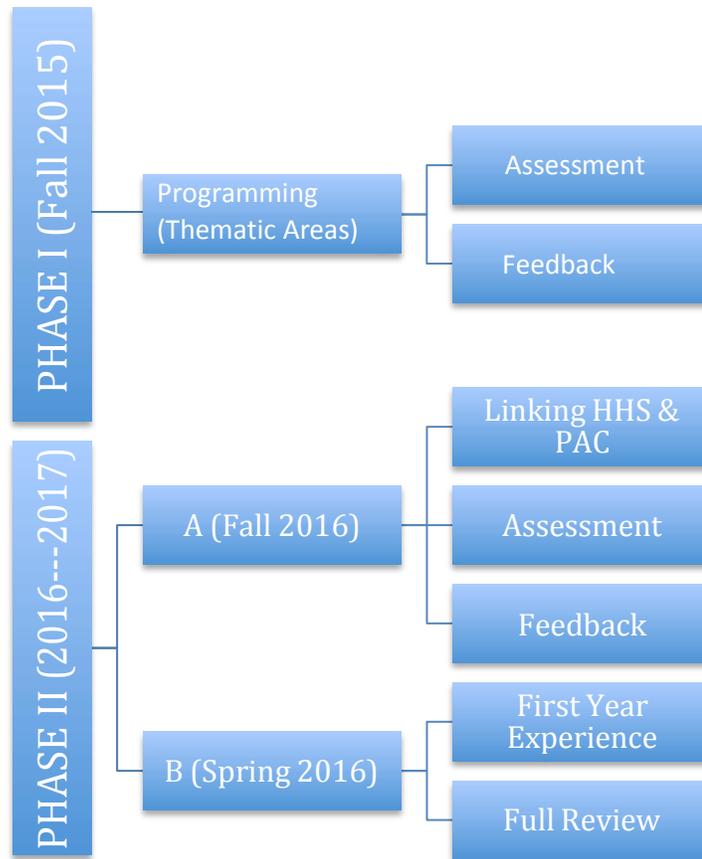
Appendix C-Enrollment Statistics by Class Designation

2014-2015 School Year Enrolment by Class Designation

Fall 2014		Winter 2014	
1,235.00	Freshman	1183	Freshman
1,392.00	Sophomore	1159	Sophomore
1,127.00	Junior	994	Junior
1,423.00	Senior	1522	Senior
34	Non---Degree Undergrad	38	Non---Degree Undergrad
4	INTO English	1	INTO English
	INTO OSU Undergrad		
137	Pathways	84	INTO Pathway
182	Masters	221	Masters
126	Doctoral	146	Doctoral
42	Post Baccalaureate	35	Post Baccalaureate
25	Non---Degree Graduate	21	Non---Degree Graduate
5	Doctor of Pharmacy	7	Doctor of Pharmacy
	INTO OSU Graduate		
10	Pathways	1	INTO OSU Graduate Pathways
2000	HHS Totals for Fall	1600	HHS Totals for Winter
292	Class # Totals	263	Class # Totals
5,742.00		5412	
78.49%	PAC Capacity relative to HHS	78.14%	PAC Capacity relative to HHS

Appendix D – Implementation Plan & Strategy

Implementation Strategy



Implementation considerations:

A small task force will be established to assist in developing and critiquing a plan for the delivery and implementation of this transition. It will be made up of CPHHS faculty with expertise in the identified areas.

Phase I (Fall 2015)

Programming:

Training of instructors, staff and GTA's: Training sessions will be provided to instructors for PAC and HHS to give examples of connected learning objectives and assignments associated with those objectives.

Marketing and communications for concept areas with students, advisors, and administration.

Assessment: Assess individual objectives for both PAC and HHS courses to evaluate that objectives are being met.

Feedback on concept areas through quantitative and qualitative surveys. Conduct focus groups to PAC and HHS students to further assess the programmatic links and changes.

Phase II (2016-2017)

Continued training of instructors and GTA's and asking for feedback.

Clarify the registration process with administration, registrar, staff, advisors, and students for concurrent registration with students.

Assessment: Update previous assessment materials and measure outcomes for PAC and HHS courses.

Begin dialoguing and exploring possibilities about the management of 1st year registration with concurrent/linked sections of PAC and HHS.

Collaborative work to review the programmatic changes and final assessment