

Funding Additional Staff During the Paradigm Shift in
Athletic Training Education

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ABSTRACT

The NATA's Education Task Force recently released its preliminary recommendations to improve athletic training education. The most prominent change in the current system is the recommendation that candidates for NATA certification complete an accredited athletic training curriculum program. Due to changing priorities, potential liability situations will arise with the development of curriculum-based programs. Unfortunately, ATCs will need to focus attention on curriculum development and will have less time for student supervision.

The purpose of this paper is to present a proposal that procures funding (via a student activities fee) to hire additional ATCs whose main responsibility would be to supervise student-athletic trainers. Increased supervision would reduce a student's, as well as, an institution's risk of medical malpractice during the institution's development of CAAHEP curriculum-based program. Student-athletic trainers are often placed in situations where they lack the experience and the expertise to accurately evaluate and treat athletic injuries. I propose that money collected from a student activities fee could be used to employ certified athletic trainers who would supervise students and provide valuable clinical instruction during the development of curriculum-based programs.

Key Words: Educational Administration, Student-athletic trainers, Liability, Finance

Ten years ago Gieck and associates ⁷ suggested that the quality of educational programs and degree candidates within athletic training was at a critical stage. According to Gieck et al., "the athletic training profession, like other health fields, is [was] confronted with an increasing demand for more and better prepared professionals." Although the professional preparation of athletic trainers has improved considerably in recent years, the internship-route has remained problematic. For example, the entry-level internship-route candidates appear to be less prepared than curriculum candidates.^{6,7,21,28,29,31}

PARADIGM SHIFT IN ATHLETIC TRAINING

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) Education Task Force has recommended the removal of the internship route as a way to meet certification eligibility.¹ One reason, the number of internship candidates who pass the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification (NATABOC) exam each year is considerably lower than the number of curriculum candidates who pass the exam.^{21,28} In 1994, 573 higher education institutions offered internship-route athletic training education.¹

It is difficult to accurately predict the total number a new programs to be accredited by the Committee for the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). According to an October 1995 letter from Robert Behnke, HSD, ATC, chair of the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Athletic Training (JRC-AT), a significant increase was reported in the

number of institutions expressing interest in developing or converting to a curriculum program.

Many issues will emerge as colleges and universities begin to appraise the development of curriculum programs. Current trends in the profession indicate that opportunities in the non-traditional setting are expanding.^{1,8,20,30} The utilization of non-traditional affiliated clinical settings is needed to ensure that all entry-level ATCs have the ability to practice in a rapidly changing health care market. Higher education institutions should be willing to cooperate with the non-traditional private sector. Although the consequences of out-sourcing (sub-contracting) traditional collegiate services to the private sector is an area that requires further study.

STUDENT ATHLETIC TRAINER LIABILITY

Student-athletic trainers cover many kinds of sporting events ranging from junior-high school girls basketball to college football. With the variety of athletic exposures, there are a variety of athletic injuries. Certified athletic trainers (ATC) need to carefully supervise student-athletic trainers because the court has found both students and ATC supervisors liable for malpractice.^{3,4,11,26,27} It would appear that more liability situations will arise with the development of new curriculum programs because of changing priorities among ATCs and the proliferation of lawsuit abuse. According to Hermann, "in a personal injury lawsuit, the average cost to defend yourself in a non-automotive case is about \$7,500 -- money you lose, even if

you win your case. And if your business or school is sued, it can cost tens of thousands of dollars for a legal defense, even if you win."¹² The costs of lawsuits passed on to consumers adds up to nearly \$1,200 every year for every person in America today.¹³

Mentorship is an important part of the non-credit learning experience, yet little has been done to remedy the legality issue. It would appear the NATA's Education Task Force, in part, has aggrandized the potential liability situation by permitting students to continue serving as student-athletic trainers during their undergraduate years at non-accredited schools.¹ Coupled with the lack of current student supervision guidelines, a single ATC could be held responsible for the supervision of all students at a school. This would place the institution and the ATC at risk for malpractice. The old guidelines from the NATA's Professional Education Committee (NATA-PEC) established a specific ratio policy for the number of student-athletic trainers per supervising ATC.¹⁹ The new CAAHEP guidelines leave this decision to individual schools.¹⁵ The NATA's Education Task Force has recommend certificates of added qualifications (CAQ) for clinical instructors.¹ However, the guidelines are not clear, and the implementation date for the CAQ's is the year 2000.

As ATCs focus attention on curriculum development issues, they will have less time for students. Curriculum regulations are laborious.^{1,10,15,16,19,26} Self-study documentation preparation alone is a full-time responsibility. Hiring more

ATCs to serve as student supervisors is one way of resolving this problem.

CURRENT FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Not only impractical, it is nearly impossible to change governmental funding in higher education. Legislative funding of athletic training positions in the public secondary schools, however, has been successful.³ Higher education is funded by a combination of state and federal appropriations and campus funds. In the United States, the state contributes the greatest amount.²³ At the state level, a complex funding formula is used to determine a school's allocation, however, there is considerable variation in support patterns among states. Private institutions receive little or no state funding. At the federal level, government leaders determine the number of taxpayer dollars that will be granted to higher education. State and federal appropriations are then combined with campus funds to establish a budget.¹⁸ In addition to the governmental appropriations, a school may raise funds from other sources such as tuition, gifts, grants, contracts, student fees, investment income, auxiliary enterprises, and student service organizations.¹⁴ On-campus methods are often the easiest way to raise funds.

AUXILIARY ENTERPRISE MODEL

Intercollegiate athletics on a campus operate under the auspices of auxiliary enterprise. An auxiliary enterprise, as

defined by the *Higher Education Finance Manual*,²³ is "an entity that exists to furnish a service to students, faculty, or staff, and charges a fee that is directly related to, although not necessarily equal to, the cost of the service." In other words, the institution charges students a fee to operate the intercollegiate athletics program. The student activity fee collected to support extracurricular activities could also be used to support an athletic training educational program since most extracurricular activities involve sports. The amount of money allocated for an athletic training program depends on the school's athletic conference level.²⁵ For example, schools that participate at NCAA Division I level spend more money on athletic training than schools playing at NCAA Division III level. The school's mission statement, peer institution, enrollment, philosophy, and alumni help determine the athletic conference level. Classifying a program as an auxiliary enterprise is a standard management technique that is not subject to outside influences.

PEDAGOGY MODEL

Court decisions have considerable influence on school funding and operation.² One has only to read the history of education to be reminded of the many times the courts have altered the course of education. Besides the legality issues of providing proper supervision for student-athletic trainers during the development of a curriculum-based program, additional staff could substantiate an academic major by teaching courses housed

in a school of allied health or similar departmental unit. The full time equivalent (FTE) hours generated by the additional staff is often associated with funding at many institutions.

STUDENT FEES

A student activity fee is one way, an easy and effective way, to generate funds which could be used to hire additional staff to serve as field supervisors. Cohen and Brawer contended that students take their studies more seriously when they have a monetary investment in education and services.⁵ Although the student activity fee is a simple way of raising money, the acquisition of fees vary by institution and state. At some institutions, state legislators may determine the percentage that a school can collect. At other institutions, key administrators or the board of trustees may set the rate.

Publicly controlled institutions generally have relatively low fees. Privately controlled colleges and universities tend to charge fees that are much higher than public institutions.

PROPOSAL

I propose that a student activity fee is a feasible way to acquire funds to hire additional staff. Refer to Figure 1 for an example of the necessary steps in obtaining funds. One plan may not serve all institutions equally well because patterns of individual support will differ. The chain-of-command is different. At one institution, the ATC may report directly to the academic dean or department chair. At another school, the ATC may report to the athletic director. Each program (ATC)

must adapt to the current system defined by their institution.

Information about athletic training and its impact not only on the student-athletes, but on the general student population,¹⁷ is imperative for a fee increase request. In the auxiliary enterprise model, providing justification is essential for the alignment of the program in a school of allied health because a successful athletic training program, unfortunately, is sometimes determined by politics and a winning team record.^{8,26}

A proposal should provide quantifiable data (e.g., the number of treatments given to intercollegiate, intramural, club, and recreational athletes by student-athletic trainers) as evidence that shows the need for additional staff supervisors. A proposal based on the pedagogy model may include information about the number of FTEs generated by the courses taught by the additional staff. However, a detailed description of the costs and benefits should be included regardless of the particular model chosen. Administrators should also be made aware of the school's liability risk when treatments are given by unsupervised students. Although some schools do not provide coverage for intramural, club, or recreational athletes, the proposal should include an overview of major lawsuits filed by injured athletes. Proposals will differ according to personal effort and style, but the urgency of quality student supervision should be paramount.

FEE CALCULATION METHODOLOGY

Currently, 98 of the 3,573 higher education institutions in the United States are accredited as athletic training educational programs,¹ although 40 percent (1,421) of the total number are 2-year institutions. Despite the sizeable number of small colleges, most students attend larger colleges.²² Current higher education enrollment data are in Table 1.

Different plans are followed by institutions in setting up the schedule of fees. One plan is to announce only a single fee that covers all charges to be paid by the student. The other plan is a complex schedule with specified charges for different types of service.²³ An example of complex scheduling in which \$0.50 was assessed for each student credit hour is outlined in Table 2.

Fringe benefits together with salary are the greatest expense for a college or university.¹⁴ Fringe benefits may include full or partial payment for health insurance, life insurance, retirement pension, and continuing education reimbursement. These benefits are not computed as part of the salary projection in Table 2.

Student activity fees vary widely by state and institution. The amount collected from fees will depend on enrollment, public law, type of institutional control, and legislative activity. The chief business officers at an institution will be knowledgeable about state and institution guidelines regarding fee schedules and public law. These people can provide

assistance with developing a proposal tailored for the institution.

CONCLUSION

Athletic training has made substantial progress in achieving professionalism. Although according to the occupation-profession continuum model by Pavalko,²⁴ athletic training will not be a true profession until its educational standards are unified. Professions, different from occupations, operate within their own set of standards. Reforming education standards is one way that occupations can become professions.⁹ The NATA's Education Task Force recommends that unifying educational standards is a top priority.

Due to changing priorities, liability situations will arise as institutions begin to develop CAAHEP curriculum-based programs. Increased supervision provided by additional staff would reduce a student's, as well as, an institution's risk of medical malpractice. Providing compensation for additional staff and faculty within higher education is difficult. Furthermore, the realities of congressional budget cuts and limited financial resources in higher education make it imperative to seek additional revenue sources. The student activity fee is one way of funding additional staff during the paradigm shift in athletic training education.

Table 1. - Institutions of higher education,
by type, and size of enrollment

Type of Enrollment	All institutions	
	Number	Enrollment
Total	3,573	14,491,226
Under 200	385	41,617
200 to 499	457	157,321
500 to 999	493	360,971
1,000 to 2,499	851	1,401,566
2,500 to 4,999	536	1,870,918
5,000 to 9,999	437	3,111,729
10,000 to 19,999	282	3,902,088
20,000 to 29,999	98	2,382,909
30,000 or more	34	1,262,107

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for
Education Statistics. May 1994

Table 2. - Student activity fee calculation example
at a small college or university

Enrollment = 3000 (sample)

STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE			
FTE credit hours		12	
Fee per credit hour	x	<u>\$0.50</u>	a
Student activity fee		\$6.00	

SEMESTER TOTAL			
Number of students		3,000	
Fee per student	x	<u>\$6.00</u>	b
Amount per semester		\$18,000	

YEARLY SALARY			
Semester salary		\$18,000	
Number of semesters	x	<u>2</u>	c
1- 10 month ATC position		\$36,000	

a Fee structure was based on current policy. ⁹
b Semester salary was generated *a priori*.
c Yearly salary was not representative of typical salary. ¹⁴

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