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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 5, 2020

Mr. Robert L. "Bob" Caslen, Jr.
President
University of South Carolina - Columbia
Osborne Admin. Building, Suite 206
Columbia, SC 29208

Dear Mr. Caslen:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive change:

Joint Academic Award with Non-SACSCOC Accredited Institution(s) or Entity(ies)

Master of Science (M.S.) in Exercise Science

Submission date:

12/17/2019

Implementation date:

8/3/2020

Case ID:

SC008503

The 39-credit hour Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Exercise Science, which is consistent with the mission of the University of South Carolina - Columbia, will be offered as a joint degree with the Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar, which is an entity not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education Title IV programs. A copy of the signed Academic Collaboration Agreement was provided with contact information for each institution:

For the University of South Carolina – Columbia

Dr. James Hardin, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum
Arnold School of Public Health
Discovery I, Building 503D
915 Greene Street
Columbia, SC 29208
jhardin@mailbox.sc.edu

For the Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Yousef Haik, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
Hamad Bin Khalifa University
P.O. Box 34110
Education City, Doha, Qatar
yohaik@hbku.edu.qa



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The Agreement outlines responsibilities of each party including provisions for evaluating curriculum, maintaining academic standards, and regularly reviewing the contract. Students must complete at least one third of their coursework at each institution. There is also a clause stating that SACSCOC accreditation of the University of South Carolina - Columbia does not extend to Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

The M.S. degree in Exercise Science is designed to prepare graduates for positions related to biomechanics, sports nutrition, sport psychology, motor control/development, and exercise physiology. The target audience includes individuals interested in pursuing jobs in the exercise science industry. Courses will be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and distance learning instruction with an expected initial enrollment of 10 students. Administrative oversight will be provided by the Program Director, Department Chair, and two International Master Coordinators. As a rationale for the program, the University cites Qatar's development of a \$20 billion sports industry, culminating in its hosting of the World Cup in 2022. The M.S. in Exercise Science is an existing program currently offered by the University; the modified joint degree version was approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2019.

A comprehensive list of all other programs offered by the University was provided, along with a list of approved off-campus instructional sites. The curriculum, course descriptions, and student learning outcomes were provided. Admission and graduation requirements, plus a definition of credit hours, were noted as well. Student learning will be assessed through written assignments, exams, and a final project or thesis. The M.S. program will be integrated into the University's ongoing institutional effectiveness process, which was described in detail. Annual assessment plans identify expected outcomes, determine the extent to which they are achieved, and provide analysis of the results. The data are then used to formulate changes for improvement of teaching and learning. Results from the standard and joint programs will be analyzed to monitor comparability between the two versions.

The Faculty Roster describes the qualifications of the two part-time and 15 full-time faculty members who will support the Exercise Science program. The faculty members each have a related doctoral degree and appear qualified to teach the assigned courses. Qualifications for future faculty members to be hired were also provided and appear appropriate. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications is the responsibility of the peer review teams who will assess the faculty as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

Library and learning resources appear to be adequate. The Thomas Cooper Library has a comprehensive collection of both physical and electronic resources that support the exercise science curriculum. This collection includes books/e-books, journals, databases, and streaming



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videos. Students enrolled in the joint degree program will have access to both the Cooper Library and the Qatar National Library. Materials may be retrieved in person at either campus location, or online from the Library websites. Additional external resources are available through the PASCAL (Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries) consortium, interlibrary loans, and a book delivery service. Librarians provide reference and research assistance through classroom instruction and individual consultations. Students may also access library research guides and video tutorials that are embedded in the Blackboard learning management system.

Student support services appear to be adequate and are available to all students, regardless of location. Along with standard academic support services such as financial aid, student records, and admissions, the University provides academic advising, career services, and disability assistance. The Graduate Program Director coordinates the orientation of new students and offers registration support as needed. Academic Success initiatives include tutoring, study skills workshops, and an early intervention referral program. Counseling and Psychiatric Services provides psychological counseling, as well as clinical supervision for select mental health graduates. Students may also participate in intramural sports, clubs, and community service programs. An overview of services provided by Hamad Bin Khalif University was provided.

The physical resources appear to be adequate. The Exercise Science program is housed in the Arnold School's Public Health Research Center which is a five-story, 104,860 square-foot building. Courses are conducted in six classrooms which are equipped with a digital projector, sound system, smart podium, Crestron touch panel, computers, with HDMI, VGA, USB-C and ethernet connections. WebEx videoconference can be set up in any of the classrooms. The building also offers 2 computer labs with 20 computers each. Distance learning instruction will occur through the existing Blackboard learning management system. Physical resources at the Qatar location also include classrooms with instructional technology and computer labs.

Financial support for the new program appears to be adequate; a sample five-year budget was provided. Expenses will include instructional personnel, administrative support, and travel. Revenues will be provided through payments from the Hamad Bin Khalifa University. Start-up costs are expected to be recovered after the first year of the program's operation. A contingency plan is in place to ensure financial stability of the program in case resources fail to materialize.

Policy Update

Please note that, at its meeting in June 2018, the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved modification of the *Substantive Change Policy for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement*, for any type of substantive change requiring approval. If an approved substantive change has not been implemented within two years of action by the SACSCOC Board of



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Trustees, the institution will need to submit a new prospectus for the change or application for a level change.

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the joint Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Exercise Science offered by the University of South Carolina – Columbia and Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar. It was the decision of the Board to approve the joint degree program and include it in the scope of the current accreditation.

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover at 404-679-4501 or via email at lthomas-glover@sacscoc.org.

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/SKO:lp

Enclosure (invoice with liaison's copy only)

cc: Mr. Douglas D. Miles, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation
Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover