

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**  
**Fairmont State Board of Governors**

**Program without Special Accreditation**

**Degree Program** B.S. in Exercise Science

**Date Submitted** February 3, 2026

**INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATION Approved by the Board of Governors (§ 5.2.8)**

The institution is obligated to recommend continuance or discontinuance of a program and to provide a brief rationale for its recommendation:

- 1. Identification of the program for further development and/or expansion due to demand (e.g., providing additional institution commitment), with or without action.
- 2. Continuation of the program at the current level of activity; with or without action.
- 3. Continuation of program at a reduced level of activity (e.g., revise curriculum, reduce credit hours, merge programs, share courses, share faculty, develop a joint program with another institution) or other corrective actions.
- 4. Discontinuance of the Program (review for potential sunset)

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

Highlight strengths. Formalize alumni tracking. Develop outreach to community members for health and fitness services. Expand partnerships with athletics. Develop Industry Advisory Council. In collaboration with academic administration and the Enrollment Management Division, develop an enrollment plan that identifies student enrollment segments and market measures and targets for each segment. In collaboration with CMCS, develop a program marketing plan.

Derek Dewig 1/15/26  
**Signature of person preparing report:** **Date**

Amanda Metcalf 2/1/2026  
**Signature of Dean** **Date**

Steve Brunel 5/18/2026  
**Signature of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs:** **Date**

HZ 6/10/26  
**Signature of President:** **Date**

[Signature] 6/25/2026  
**Signature of Chair, Board of Governors:** **Date**



Fairmont State University  
Board of Governors

Board Action Item Approval

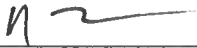
Date: 6/25/2026

**Action Item:** Approval of the Program Review for BS in Exercise Science Without Special Accreditation

1. Approve above action item as presented.

2. Approve above action with the following stipulation:

3. Table the above action item until \_\_\_\_\_  
(next Board of Governors' meeting)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
FSU President

6/25/26  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
FSU Board of Governors' Chair

6/25/2026  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Executive Summary for Program Review

Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science

College of Education, Health and Human Performance

On-campus Delivery

The Exercise Science program at Fairmont State University has positioned itself as a strong and competitive choice for students interested in careers that can positively influence the well-being of communities and individuals through exercise and health promotion. Additionally, many students choose to pursue a degree in exercise science to receive a high-level foundation of biomechanics, anatomy, physiology, health and wellness (amongst others) in pursuit of professional graduate program admission (e.g., physical therapy, athletic training, occupational therapy, medical school, physician's assistant, etc.). The program has adapted its curriculum paths through the addition of three concentrations: Exercise Physiology, Kinesiology, and Allied Health. These were developed to address student feedback/concerns from the previous 5-year review and to provide specific curricular pathways for Exercise Science students based on their desired career. For example, students interested in attending professional schools (e.g. physical therapy, athletic training, chiropractic, occupational therapy, etc.) are often advised into the Exercise Physiology concentration which allows them to build a deeper understanding of research and clinical application, whereas students who are not interested in graduate school are often advised into the Kinesiology concentration allowing the addition of a minor and curriculum focused on teaching and instruction. The Allied Health concentration is the newest and is primarily designed for students interested in medical school or physician's assistant programs. The primary differentiating factor between this and the Exercise Physiology concentration is the requirement of advanced natural science courses that are often necessary for admission the aforementioned medical degree programs.

The financial standing for the Exercise Science program is healthy; enrollment has been trending upward and is higher than the previous 5-year review. Application and inquiry trends for the major have remained stable to increasing over the review period, aligning with enrollment growth. Enrollment remains strong for the Exercise Science program, as demonstrated by five-year enrollment stability above 200 majors annually. From 2021 to 2025, enrollment increased within the major (from 200 to 212). Within this 5-year timeframe, enrollment has remained at 200 or more students each academic year. This reflects the program faculty, curriculum, and national demand for exercise science and health professionals. Moreover, the Exercise Science program's percent of institutional enrollment has increased from 5.48% in AY 2020/2021 to 7.27% in AY 2024/2025 considering an overall decrease in student enrollment in the past 5 years, thus demonstrating the relative enrollment strength and institutional contribution of the Exercise Science program at Fairmont State University (Table 8). The primary challenges for the Exercise Science program lie in new accreditation procedures from national organizations. Primarily, the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) will soon be requiring students who are interested in becoming certified strength and conditioning coaches (CSCS) to attend an NSCA accredited institution to sit for the examination. We are currently not accredited, although some of our students are interested in pursuing this certification. Similarly, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) is updating standards for accreditation for its Exercise Physiologist and Clinical Exercise Physiologist certification, which may have an impact on our program, although we do not often have students

pursue these certifications. Over the next five years, the Exercise Science faculty will determine if the pursuit of these accreditations is feasible given faculty load and institutional resources.

The Exercise Science program undergoes consistent and extensive assessment of student learning outcomes for each course within the curriculum each semester. Specifically, the program coordinator ensures that each faculty member who teaches within the program evaluates and submits relevant course data as it pertains and aligns with program outcomes. Program assessment is currently broken down into three categories: 1) Exercise Science core, 2) Exercise Physiology emphasis, and 3) Kinesiology emphasis. Courses that fall into one (or more) of these categories are assessed at the end of each semester (with minor exceptions) to evaluate if specific learning outcomes have been met, exceeded or failed to be met. For consistently unmet learning outcomes, faculty meet internally to discuss methods of improvement, resulting in targeted adjustments to assignments, rubrics, and instructional strategies. These learning outcomes are designed to highlight the primary knowledge and/or skills that students are expected to gain from individual courses and, when met and aggregated together, produce well-prepared students for entrance into the field of exercise science or further graduate and professional education. The plan and assessment strategy for each concentration is listed in Appendix C. The results for assessment goals can be found in Appendix D. The primary points of improvement based on assessment findings are within the Kinesiology concentration and *PHED 3360: Strength and Conditioning*. As PHED 3360 is one of the newest courses within the major, it is not unexpected that it has the most “unmet” assessment results in the Exercise Science Core, as this is consistent with typical implementation phases of new courses. Over the next year, it will be discussed amongst faculty members how to best adjust the assessment criteria and course content to ensure student success and learning objectives are met. The Kinesiology concentration assessment showed a higher number of “unmet” results, reflecting the purposeful instructional focus of the curriculum. These courses introduce students to learning how to teach and apply movement skills, representing a meaningful transition from the science focus of typical Exercise Science courses. Regarding the current Exercise Science course curriculum, the program faculty feel that the course offerings are appropriate and sufficiently prepare students for their desired careers following graduation. However, it is possible that the addition of an introduction to athletic injuries/“pre-medical professional” type course may be of benefit to students within the Exercise Physiology and Allied Health concentrations. This could give our students who want to go into medical fields additional knowledge that may translate into immediate success in these professional graduate programs. Another additional course(s) that the program will consider is two four credit anatomy and physiology courses for pre-professional students to take within the Health and Human Performance Department. This would help these students fulfill their A&P prerequisites within the department, but it will require a laboratory component which could potentially be completed virtually or with a physical, digital anatomy table. This will be discussed over the next two to three years to determine feasibility and practicality. Programmatic decisions regarding concentrations, curriculum sequencing, assessment and resource allocation are guided by enrollment trends, professional school prerequisites, workforce data demand and assessment data.

While systematically collected information regarding student placement post-graduation is lacking (and is a point of improvement over the next 5 years), alumni were surveyed and the majority of respondents (based on available survey data) indicated employment in a medical or exercise science related field and/or current enrollment in professional degree graduate programs. These medical fields (e.g., physical therapy, occupational therapy, athletic training, etc.) generally have

faster than average growth rates as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Additionally, the Exercise Science program has created a 4+1 accelerated graduate path for completion of both undergraduate and graduate Exercise Science degrees. The intention of this was to provide students with the opportunity to attend graduate school at a reduced cost and an accelerated timeline.

Overall, the Exercise Science program at Fairmont State University has demonstrated strong growth, curricular responsiveness, and sustained academic quality over the past five years. The addition of concentrations has aligned the curriculum with student career goals while strengthening preparation for both workforce entry and competitive professional and graduate programs. Enrollment trends and the program's increasing share of institutional enrollment demonstrate its value and relevance to the broader University mission. Ongoing, systematic assessment supports continuous improvement, with identified areas for refinement already guiding curricular discussions and future course development. While emerging accreditation standards and improved post-graduation tracking present challenges, they also offer clear opportunities for program advancement. Taken together, the program is financially stable, academically robust, and well positioned to continue meeting student needs and evolving professional expectations over the next five years.