

Benedictine University
General Interest Survey for Undergraduate Students
Spring, 2002: Nutrition Program (n=20)

Background:

A survey was administered by the course instructor to students in physiology courses in spring 2002 to assess their interest in pursuing graduate level education, in particular in the field of Exercise Physiology. The questions and results follow.

Directions:

The University is in the process of evaluating some major changes in one of its graduate programs. Please take a few minutes and complete the following questionnaire. Your answers will allow us to better serve student needs and provide the highest quality education possible. All answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation!

Exercise Physiologists study the acute and chronic physiological responses and adaptations resulting from physical activity. They can apply this knowledge to improve or maintain health, fitness or performance. Exercise Physiologists work and study in commercial, clinical and workplace settings to increase health, fitness and quality of life for the general population. Examples of potential career paths include: cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialists, personal trainers or directors of employee fitness programs.

1. Before reading the brief background information above, did you know much about the field of exercise physiology? Yes: **15** No: **5**

2. Are you familiar with the University's Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiovascular Health (PARCH) Program? Yes: **2** No: **18**

3. Are you considering pursuing a career in this field?
 Yes: **7** Unsure: **7** No: **6** (Please go to Q.8)

4. Would you consider completing a master's degree in exercise physiology?
 Yes: **8** Unsure: **4** No: **2** (Please go to Q.8)

5. How soon after graduation would you consider returning to school?
 Immediately 1 year 2-3 years 4-5 years More than 5 years
8 **2** **0** **0** **0**

6. Currently, there are three schools in Illinois that offer a master's degree in Exercise Physiology. If you were to consider remaining in Illinois to pursue this degree, which ONE of the following universities would you most likely attend?
 Benedictine University Northeastern University Southern Illinois University
11 **0** **1**

7. Most Exercise Physiology graduate programs are designed for students to return to school after completion of their undergraduate degree. If a master's degree was created which allowed you to complete both your bachelors and masters degrees in five years, would you consider attending?
 Yes: **11** Unsure: **1** No: **0**

8. What is your year in school?
 Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
0 **5** **8** **7**
9. What is your major?
0 Biology **0** Environmental Science **0** Health Science
0 Molecular Biology **20** Nutrition **0** Other:

Discussion:

From this study, the results clearly indicate an interest in the field of exercise physiology. This is consistent with the results of a follow-up study completed in 2003, when exercise physiology is ranked second under nutrition as the choice graduate degree, and a preferred choice over graduate degrees in public health, education, food science, and business degrees.

Ninety-two percent of the students in this survey selected Benedictine University over two competitors. This is similar to the results of our 2004 alumni survey when our students indicated a preference for Benedictine University; nearly 76% of our nutrition alumni responded that they would “enroll in the Nutrition Program(s) at Benedictine University, if I had to do it all over again.”

Most respondents (92%) on this survey indicated an interest in completing an undergraduate and graduate degree through a five year program, underscoring the importance of cross-listed courses and careful scheduling. In 2005, the Nutrition Department launched the M.S. in Nutrition and Wellness, which can be completed in 15 months of full-time graduate coursework. In 2005 and again in 2006 our undergraduate Nutrition Program has experienced increases in enrollment greater than the national mean in dietetics. In 2007 the Nutrition Department has been working on an undergraduate-graduate “bridge” program for those who already have a bachelor degree and are interested in completing their DPD Verification Statement and M.S. in Nutrition and Wellness in the most efficient way possible. Although our current allocation of six pre-match slots for the qualified Benedictine University students has been adequate thus far, the Benedictine University Dietetic Internship program plans to proactively expand the total number of available Dietetic Internship slots for qualified candidates from 12 to 15 in fall 2008.

*Data Compiled 2002 by Allison Wilson (Biology Department Chairperson)
 Report updated August 3, 2007, by Catherine Arnold (DPD Director)*