

Alfred University athletic training program awarded accreditation

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ALFRED, NY Alfred University's athletic training program has been informed it will be awarded national accreditation, making the program one of the most competitive in the region. AU received word Wednesday, March 9, that the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Professions (CAAHEP) Joint Review Committee on Athletic Training (JRC-AT) has recommended accreditation for the AU program. CAAHEP will meet in April to formally grant initial accreditation. It was welcome news to the University, particularly the faculty and staff in the athletic training department. "Were very excited about this," commented Dr. Timothy Howell, athletic training program director and assistant professor of athletic training. "This makes us much more competitive with other programs in the region." Indeed, CAAHEP accreditation is important to the success and development of any athletic training program. Only graduates of CAAHEP-accredited programs are qualified to sit for the National Athletic Trainers Association Board of Certification (NATABOC) examination, a requirement for becoming a certified athletic trainer. "With prospective students, the first question they ask is, "Are you accredited?" Howell said. "Obviously, this makes our program more attractive." Alfred University joins Canisius College, University at Buffalo and SUNY Brockport as the only universities in western New York with CAAHEP-accredited athletic training programs. Only 11 other schools in New York State are accredited. "This is truly significant because it provides our students with the ability to say they graduated from an accredited program," said Dr. William Hall, AU acting provost and vice president of academic affairs. "This shows that our program meets very high standards. It is a testament our staff and reflects the high quality of the program." The athletic training program is based in the AU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Hall credited the faculty for strengthening the program and helping it gain accreditation. "Our (liberal arts and sciences) faculty are exceptional," Hall said, noting the College was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa chapter last year. Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest and largest academic honor society. "To have the athletic training program in that college adds to its high quality." AU applied for accreditation in June 2002. After the University submitted its application, there was a self-study period, followed by an on-site visit by CAAHEP's Joint Review Committee on Athletic Training. In order to meet the requirements for accreditation, the University took several steps, which included adding staff to the athletic training program. In addition to Howell, the staff also includes Chris Yartym, clinical education coordinator; Kim Calvert, head athletic trainer; and assistant trainers David Cox and Frank Vaughan. CAAHEP accreditation requires a student-faculty ration of 8:1 or better. With 21 students currently enrolled in the AU program, the University could easily accommodate the increase in enrollment it expects after gaining accreditation. The AU program expanded its course offerings as well, adding classes to the curriculum (a total of five will have been added by the end of the fall 2005 semester). In addition, a required internship program has been put in place. The four-credit clinical internship course, which seniors must take the spring semester of their senior year, "is very important," Howell said, "because it gives students athletic training experience outside the university setting." Prior to the implementation of the internship program, athletic training majors received the bulk of their practical experience assisting trainers with the various AU sports teams. Howell said the athletic training program at AU has been enhanced greatly through the accreditation process, both in terms of classroom instruction and practical experience. "With athletic training, you need a balance of both," he said. "The students are getting that here. What they learn in the classroom is outstanding. With the games and practices they attend, and the internships, they're gaining so much valuable experience."