

HEALTH PROMOTION MAJOR

Professor Nicolette Bell, Program Director

Mission

The mission of the Health Promotion program is to prepare graduates as health educators who promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention, model life-long learning through continuing education, and are engaged in their profession and community.

Program Strengths

- Focuses on the understanding and promotion of health in populations.
- Strong health science emphasis that provides students with a robust health care foundation.
- Eligibility for certifications through NCHEC as a Certified Health Education Specialist, or through the National Wellness Institute as a Certified Wellness Practitioner.
- Built in development of a minor with the HPRO program based on student long-term plans.
- Complementary array of interdisciplinary coursework in Natural Sciences, Exercise Science, Psychology, and Integrated Communication.
- Collaborate with community organizations and businesses on healthy living initiatives.
- Exciting and practical immersed internship experiences.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the occupation of health educators and community health workers is expected to grow by 21 percent by 2022.
- Typical employment opportunities include corporations, health insurance companies, state and federal health departments, hospitals and rehabilitation clinics, non-profit organizations and fitness / recreation centers.

Program Description

Health Promotion is defined as, “the art and science of helping people discover the synergies between their core passions and optimal health, enhancing their motivation to strive for optimal health, and supporting them in changing their lifestyle to move toward a state of optimal health. Optimal health is a dynamic balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health” (O'Donnell, 2009).

Health Promotion at the University of Charleston is a baccalaureate degree program, at the Charleston location, that prepares graduates as health education professionals. Students can be either traditional or adult students and can choose to

complete the program full-time or on a part-time basis. Students are both majors and/or pre-professionals who have the option of completing the program in either 3 or 4 years (full-time status) depending on whether they are needing pre-requisites for professional placement in the workforce or graduate school. Students will engage in a multidisciplinary curriculum with a strong health science emphasis that provides a robust health care foundation, while also offering a complementary array of coursework in Natural Sciences, Psychology, Exercise Science, and Integrated Communication. The opportunity to gain real world skills in the professional environment of their discipline equips graduates with the work experience that employers and graduate schools desire. For example, students have the opportunity to work with local schools and organizations in providing nutrition and health seminars and presentations. Students will refine their ability to perform comprehensive program development in areas such as assessing health needs, planning, implementation, evaluation, and management.

Graduates can be employed in settings such as state and local health departments, health insurance agencies, corporate wellness programs, non-profit organizations, and hospitals and rehabilitation clinics. Graduates will also have the education required for further study in graduate programs such as Public Health, Exercise Science, and Health Care Administration. If so desired, the strong and motivated student can also incorporate pre-requisite coursework, above and beyond what is required of them to graduate with a Health Promotion major, to pursue professional health care graduate programs.

Program Outcomes

The graduate will be able to:

1. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect of individual differences within the healthcare profession.
2. Plan and implement health education and promotion.
3. Conduct and evaluate research related to health and health related fields.
4. Model professional behaviors and attitudes that reflect the expectations of the healthcare profession and the community.
5. Communicate and advocate for changing lifestyles progressing towards optimal health.

Admission and Successful Progression

All undergraduate students are eligible to declare Health Promotion as their major.

To progress in the program and graduate, students must pass their required courses, including a 3 or 12 credit immersed internship, with a C or better and meet the institutional academic requirement of maintaining a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA to remain in good academic standing.

What You Will Study

The Health Promotion major consists of 120 credit hours that include a combination of major courses and related disciplines (80 credits), core courses (15 credits), and elective credit courses (28 credits).

The following is a guide based on a 4-year completion period. **Students may accelerate their experience and complete the program in 3 or 3 ½ years if desired.** Every student is assigned an academic advisor who will assist with degree completion planning and career exploration.

Sample Curriculum Sequence

FRESHMAN YEAR			
FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
UNIV 104 College Motivation & Success	3	V 105	3
COMM 101 Writing I	3	COMM 102 Writing II	3
HSCI 110 History of Health Sciences	3	SPCH 103 Oral Comm	3
HPRO 100 Introduction to Health Promotion	3	EXER 225 Medical Terminology	3
MATH 120/121 Math	3	ICOM 151 Intro to Human Communication	3
PSYC 101 Introduction to Psychology	3	PSYC 212 Lifespan & Development	3
TOTAL CREDITS	18		18
SOPHOMORE YEAR			
HSCI 204 Nutrition	3	EXER 252 Foundations of Injury Management	3
BIOL 171 Anatomy & Physiology I	3	EXER 330 Special Populations	3
BIOL 171L Anatomy & Physiology Lab I	1	BIOL 172 Anatomy & Physiology II	3
ICOM 225 Principles of Public Relations	3	BIOL 172L Anatomy & Physiology Lab II	1
HSCI 230 Interprofessional Practice & Collaboration	3	EXER 304 Sport Nutrition for the Health Professional	3
Minor Elective	3	Minor Elective	3
TOTAL CREDITS	16		16
JUNIOR YEAR			
HSCI 302 Health Ethics & Policy	3	EXER 452 Organization and Admin	3
HPRO/EXER 340 Exercise & Psychological Mindfulness	3	ICOM 305 Public Relations Campaigns OR	3

		ICOM 362 Public Relations Writing	
NSCI 220/PSYC 315/BUSI 317/HSCI 312 Statistics	3	HSCI 401 Health Leadership & Management	3
Minor Elective	3	POLS 280 Debating Political Issues	3
Minor Elective	3	HPRO 310 Public & Global Health	3
TOTAL CREDITS	15		15
SENIOR YEAR			
HPRO 475 Health Promotion Capstone	3	HPRO 498 Internship OR HPRO 497 Internship	12/3
HSCI 402 Research	3	Minor Elective	
Minor Elective	3		
Minor Elective	3		
Minor Elective	3		
Minor Elective	3		
TOTAL CREDITS	18		15/6

Immersed Internship -- Ready for the Real World!

Health Promotion majors complete an immersed 3 or 12-credit internship in the final semester before graduation. Students can apply and/or arrange to complete this experience in any location pending university approval. The opportunity to gain real world skills in the professional environment of their discipline equips graduates with the work experience that employers and graduate schools desire. Students will refine their ability to perform comprehensive program development in areas such as assessing health needs, planning, implementation, evaluation, and management.

Graduate Programs

Health Promotion graduates will also have the education required to further their education in graduate programs such as Public Health, Exercise Science, and Health Care Administration.

Professional Certifications

Additionally, graduates can increase their marketability by seeking outside professional certifications such as Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), American College of Sports Medicine certifications (ACSM), American College of Exercise Certifications (ACE), Performance Enhancement Specialist (PES), and First Aid/CPR/AED.