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Kiki Schleiff Cherry

Ouachita News Bureau

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For immediate release

## **Ouachita introduces Master of Science degree in exercise science**

*By Kiki Schleiff Cherry*

April 5, 2021

For more information, contact Ouachita's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University will expand its kinesiology program to include a Master of Science degree in exercise science, expected to launch in fall 2023.

Housed in the Huckabee School of Education, the master's degree program will be built around the concept of "Exercise is Medicine." Ouachita holds the only gold status credential in the state for participation in the Exercise is Medicine program managed by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

According to the ACSM website, Exercise is Medicine is a global health initiative to make physical activity assessment and promotion a standard in clinical care, connecting health care with evidence-based physical activity resources for people everywhere and of all abilities.

"We are moving away from the stereotypical idea of what exercise science is about, broadening and expanding the role that exercise plays in everyday life," said Dr. Terry DeWitt, chair of Ouachita's department of kinesiology. "There are so many things you can do with this field: corporate wellness, working with tactical athletes, cardiac rehabilitation, exercise physiology. The applications are endless."

“Dr. DeWitt and the kinesiology faculty are putting together a program that is both unique and applicable to a variety of health-related fields,” said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of the Huckabee School. “Exercise science is growing nationwide, and we’re seeing that in our own undergraduate program. We’re pleased to extend our mission to graduate studies and help students take the next steps in their careers.”

The low-residency, 36-hour program will offer fully-online courses with two required on-campus weekend workshops and an optional weekend residency in the summer before the program begins.

“We want to make this master’s program user-friendly and interactive in a way that’s unique to other online courses,” DeWitt explained. “It will be accessible and flexible enough for people who are working while also providing tremendous hands-on experiences and learning opportunities.”

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the demand for exercise physiologists is expected to grow 13% during the next 10 years. The median annual wage in the field is \$50,280.

Ouachita brings a faith-based component to the study of exercise science. DeWitt explained that it can be a form of ministry, affecting “personal health and wellness, the way you treat people, mental health and your relationship with God.”

It is anticipated that applications will open for Ouachita’s Master of Science degree program in exercise science in October 2022, pending approval from the Higher Learning Commission, Ouachita’s accrediting agency.

To learn more about the program, contact Dr. Jeff Root at [rootj@obu.edu](mailto:rootj@obu.edu) or at (870) 245-4186.