Mission: The Department of Health and Sport Studies offers the MA and PhD in Sport Studies (SS) and the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (PSPA). The SS graduate program takes a critical cultural studies approach to an understanding of sport in its historical and contemporary contexts, emphasizing especially issues of diversity, social equity and power relations. The PSPA program integrates the study of the psychosocial aspects of participation in sport and physical activity with an analysis of the health consequences of a sedentary lifestyle. These areas are linked not only through their common concern with examining sport and physical activity but also through the employment of cross- and inter-disciplinary theories and methods that reflect the research interests and strengths of the faculty. The mission of our doctoral program is to prepare students of the highest quality for positions in teaching and scholarship at leading universities including R1 institutions. The mission of our masters program is to prepare graduates of the highest quality for positions as knowledgeable health care providers and educators or for further academic work.

Role in University’s Core Mission: Our graduate students contribute to the University’s core teaching mission and to the enhancement of undergraduate health primarily through the instruction they offer in a number of popular GER courses: Resiliency and Your College Experience, Tobacco and Your College Experience, Alcohol and Your College Experience, and Physical Activity Through the Life Span. These provide undergraduates with research based knowledge intended to inform the decisions they make with respect to health and lifestyle, and the role that physical activity can play in promoting wellness. The graduate degree programs advance the University’s research mission through: cross-listed graduate courses, faculty joint appointments, faculty service on comprehensive examination and dissertation committees in other departments, and research workshops and colloquia involving students and faculty from other departments. HSS doctoral students also contribute significantly to the production and dissemination of research in their particular fields, and the work of SS students with the likes of the Iowa State Historical Society and the Iowa Women’s Archives advances the UI’s mission of outreach to the local and state community.

Admissions Processes and Criteria: Student demand and recruitment: We identify and seek out the most promising young scholars through a national and international network of professional contacts and alumni. This process is facilitated by the department’s long-standing reputation for academic excellence, cutting-edge research, and leadership on issues such as gender equity and diversity. Once an initial contact has been made, individual faculty members maintain a regular correspondence with the strongest prospects in their areas of expertise.

Between 2002, when HSS was restructured, and 2005, our department averaged 45.4 applications a year (range: 37-55). With the retirement of key faculty we had to suspend our very popular graduate programs in athletic administration in 2007 and, as a result, applications to our graduate programs have declined, from 55 in 2006 to 35 in 2008.

Criteria: Our criteria for admission are: a GPA of 3.0; verbal GRE scores in the top 50th percentile; an analytical GRE score of 4.5 or better; three strong letters of recommendation; and a statement of purpose that indicates a good fit with our departmental focuses and strengths. Our minimum TOEFL score for international students is 220 (computer based) or 560 (paper).

Quality of students admitted and enrolled: The average GPA of students admitted to our graduate programs through 2001-2007 was 3.37, somewhat lower than that for all social science departments (3.51) but closer to the mean for the University (3.45). Our data for the GRE indicate that students enrolled in HSS achieved higher scores than those in comparable programs elsewhere in the nation (for 2004-2006, from 2-45 points higher for Verbal; from 39-122 points higher for Quantitative). Graduate College data for 2004-2007, however, show HSS students scoring
497 (V) and 605 (Q) compared to 543 (V) and 634 (Q) for other social science units, and 515 (V) and 626 (Q) for
the UI as a whole. At 4.6, the mean of scores of those enrolled in HSS on the recently introduced GRE analytic
writing sample is higher than that of the University as a whole (4.4) and the nation (4.1) although it is slightly below
the mean for all social science departments (4.9). Taken as a whole these data indicate that the quality of our
graduate cohort is high compared to other institutions offering programs in the field but that we still need to work at
attracting a higher caliber of student relative to other units at this university.

**Diversity of students:** Our curricula and faculty research programs signal our commitment to diversity and we work
hard to identify and attract students of diverse backgrounds, something which is reflected in our enrollment figures.
In Fall 2008, 5 of 28 graduate students (18%) were of color (3 African American, 1 Native American, 1 Asian
American.) In Fall 2009, 11 of 38 students (29%) are of color or are foreign (3 African American, 1 Native
American, 2 Asian American, 5 foreign). In addition we continue our proud tradition of educating exceptional
women in the field: 24 of our 38 graduate students are women (63%).

**Financial Aid Commitments:** HSS commits to 5 years of funding for PhD students and 2 years for MA students.
In 2008-2009 we received 8.25 HTE from CLAS; in the current year we have 7.5 HTEs from CLAS and .5 HTE
from a grant secured by Dr. Kathleen Janz. We also receive significant funding from DCE (for the current year, 22
HTEs) to support the Health and Physical Activity Skills courses in the GER program. We also sponsor our more
senior graduate students through Saturday and Evening Programs under whose auspices they teach introductory
level courses in our undergraduate major. In addition we have a healthy internal scholarship system that allows us
to attract and support strong students; two scholarships provide tuition, room, and board.

**Program Outcomes:** **Degree completion and time-to-degree:** Almost all our MA students finish the program in
two years. The PhD degree completion rate (as of May 2008) for those who entered 1996-2000 was 45% (HSS
ranked 4th out of 10 social science units) and TTD was a median of 5.3 (HSS ranked 1st out of 10 social science
units).

**Fellowships, awards, honors and publications:** We have successfully nominated two graduate students for
Graduate Merit Fellowships, one for a Presidential Fellowship (the recipient accepted a better financial offer from
the University of Maryland), and one for a Summer Fellowship. Our students also excel in national associations in
our field. Iowa students have won the award for the best student paper at the North American Society for Sociology
of Sport (NASSS) conferences four times since the establishment of the award; no other university has produced
more winning papers. Doctoral students have also won the student paper award from the North American Society
for Sport History (NASSH), the student paper award from the Sport Literature Association, and the dissertation
award from the International Society for the History of Sport. Three students have received travel awards from the
NASSH Roberta Park Fund, one has received a research grant from the Iowa State Historical Society, and one
received an honor for a paper presented to the 2009 Jakobsen Conference. An American Studies graduate whose
dissertation was chaired by HSS faculty won the outstanding book award from both NASSS and NASSH for his
book based on his dissertation and two HSS graduates have won awards for the Article of the Year in the Sociology

**Placement:** We prepare our doctoral students for careers in academe as the next generation of scholars and
university teachers and, until 2007 also prepared administrators of athletic programs located within those academic
communities. Our data indicate that of 23 PhD students graduating between 1997 and 2008, 19 (83%) took
positions on college campuses. Twelve (52%) have tenure track positions (two of them in R1 institutions), three
have non-tenure track positions, three are in administration, and one has a research appointment. Our four other
graduates from this period are in careers connected to their graduate study: research, consulting, and software
development for a sport advocacy group. We think these patterns reflect very creditably on our graduate students
and the quality of the preparation they receive at Iowa.
Some of our MA students are preparing for further graduate study; many of them stay at Iowa. Sport studies students with ambitions for a career in athletic administration have been very successful finding entry positions in university athletic departments; with major sport governing bodies such as the NCAA, and the US and the International Olympic Committees; or with advocacy groups such as the Women’s Sport Foundation. Graduates of the MA program in PSPA are primarily interested in health promotion and they find positions in health education in colleges and universities (comparable to the UI Student Health Services), in community agencies, in voluntary health organizations (such as the American Cancer Society), in health-related consulting, in advocacy organizations, and at health and fitness centers.

Program Characteristics: **Size:** As detailed in our 2008 program assessment we believe that each research active faculty can successfully mentor three to four doctoral students. With our FTE currently at 5.00 and 22 PhD students (three of these are close to completion) the size of the cohort is appropriate for faculty resources, as is the fit between student research interests and faculty expertise. We anticipate that we will have to be more selective in our admissions in the future.

**Comparison with similar/peer programs:** Although there are many institutions offering graduate programs in a field which might be generally termed “health and sport studies” there is none that offers the kind and quality of coursework and preparation that this department does. The hallmarks of our programs are cross- and inter-disciplinarity (ranging across and bridging the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities); an emphasis on studying and promoting diversity and equity; and the provision of instruction and mentorship by research active scholars who are leaders in their fields. Our enrollment and placement data, the publication profile of our students and their success in garnering awards and honors, particularly those offered by professional associations in health and sport studies, all support our claim to being one of the very best -- if not the best – in the nation. Our mark has been made especially in sport sociology in which we have prepared more active scholars than any other graduate program in North America. We aspire to making the same kind of mark in the allied area of sport history and in PSPA, to having each new cohort of Iowa graduate students distinguish itself early at the conferences of our national organizations and to their filling the academic positions for which they are keenly sought on graduation.

**Strengths/weaknesses:** The section immediately above addresses the strengths of our programs. Our major concern is that a continued denial of resources, most importantly tenure track faculty lines, will diminish the high quality and damage the national reputation of our programs. That reputation has been hard earned, it is well deserved and we are fully committed to preserving it.

**Opportunities for growth/reorganization:** In light of the concern expressed above and in the context of reduced resources and continued student demand, we are mindful of building on our established relationships with allied and kindred disciplines and departments such as Journalism and Mass Communication and American Studies. Current connections such as cross-listed courses and faculty mentoring of PhD students from other units bode well for the possibility of developing further links, formal and informal, and we are working on imagining what these might be and pursuing them.

**Conclusions:** Our SS graduate program is recognized as one of the top in the nation and its graduates are in high demand. This program’s reputation rests on the quality of faculty scholarship and our innovative, critical and cross- and inter-disciplinary curriculum. Our PSPA program integrates the study of the psychosocial aspects of sport and physical activity with an analysis of the health consequences of a sedentary versus an active lifestyle and like sport studies bridges disciplines and research traditions. Clearly, our great challenge is our small faculty size but we are exploring how to meet this and are confident that we will thus be able to further strengthen our nationally renowned programs.