OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

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Wellness program receives national accreditation

*By **Katie Land**, news editor*

The National Wellness Institute has deemed Oakland University's Wellness, Health Promotion and Injury Prevention program fit to be accredited as one of the top wellness programs in America.

Located within the School of Health Sciences, the WHP program debuted in 2002 with the aim to produce broadly educated wellness generalists with additional expertise in a specific area of interest, according to the Web site.

"The National Wellness Institute has 30 years of rich, professional history in the field of wellness and health promotion, providing resources and academic guidance to universities and clinics around the world," said Kenneth Hightower, dean of the School of Health Sciences. "For Oakland University and the School of Health Sciences' Wellness program, being awarded this national accreditation is a huge honor."

The accreditation provides WHP graduates with a 2.75 GPA or above the opportunity to register as Certified Wellness Practitioners, giving Oakland a significant advantage over other Michigan universities, according to Stafford Rorke, director of the WHP program.

"Accreditation validates the School of Health Sciences as pioneering in integrated, cooperative healthcare practices that will characterize future team approaches to protecting our citizens and keeping them safe and healthy in the home, workplace and streets," Hightower said.

An Oakland educated wellness practitioner will be prepared for career as a health and fitness technician, exercise specialist, personal trainer, health promotion or wellness coordinator, counselor, human resources practitioner, patient services coordinator or similar occupation.

"In a competitive market, OU and the School of Health Sciences will benefit by attracting the best and brightest students dedicated to becoming health care professionals," Hightower continued.

Oakland's wellness program is considered one of the top 10 in the country in peer recognition and quality by NWI. After this initial identification, the organization was invited OU to begin the accreditation process.

"The ranking is stunning news, particularly given the fact that the WHP program did not lobby anyone and the NWI identified 250 undergraduate wellness programs throughout the country," Rorke said.

The three main criteria for accreditation require that students be immersed in the current knowledge, theories and techniques of wellness practitioners by creating a scientific base, building healthy behaviors and being professionally prepared to enter the workplace.

The concept of wellness can be described as a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential in a multi-dimensional and holistic manner that encompasses lifestyle, mental and spiritual well-being.

For more information about Oakland's WHP program, visit the Web site at **oakland.edu/shs/whp**.

SUMMARY
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