

ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES, 05/24/2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Marlon Alaan, Sue Barber, Mary Ellen Barkman, Teresa Dean, David Erickson, Stephen Miller, David Pingol, Norman Schlact, Shamsah Shidi, Jim Switzer, Tricia Trinke

GUESTS PRESENT: Amy Brush (Outreach Coordinator)

PROGRAM FACULTY: Rebecca Kramer (Program Director)
Mary Hanlon, Barb Heier

MEETING TIME: 7:00 PM – 9:15 PM

I. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves and indicated their current place of employment. Recent SPC PTA graduate Stephen Miller was welcomed as a new member of the committee.

II. Program Update

R. Kramer reported the following:

- On May 7, 2011 the PTA Program graduated 32 students. Two students anticipate graduating in July 2011. One student has finished the PTA curriculum but has one general education/support course to finish, the other student has all general education /support courses met and will complete her last clinical course in June. This class initially began in the fall of 2009 with 47 students. Three of these graduates actually started the program in 2008 but had to repeat a failed course so from the class that began in 2009, 31 of the 47 graduated. A graduation rate of 66%.
- There are 24 freshmen who will complete their first clinical affiliation this summer. This class had 49 admitted and initially began with 44 in the fall of 2010. Currently, the graduation rate for this class is 55%.

- The program has been full for the August 2011 class for over two years. The program is currently placing accepted students into August of 2014. Placement will continue until August 1, 2011 when a new admissions process will begin. As of August 2, 2011 the program will no longer accept applications year round for guaranteed placement in the next available year. There will be an open admission period (January – March) for the following August.

For individuals who have been accepted into 2011, 2012 and 2013 - the program will honor those placements. Experience has proven many of these individuals will have moved on and seats will open up. The admissions department will fill those empty seats with applications received during the open admission period on a somewhat selective basis using grades from BSC 2085/2085L and HSC 1531 and a point system. The higher the grade, the greater the points, those with the most points get the open seats. Accepted students from the waiting list may also apply for a seat during this open admission period.

- As in past years St. Petersburg College hosted a PTA board exam review course by International Educational Resources. The course had 49 attendees. There were 31 SPC students and 18 students from other colleges, mostly in Florida (Polk, Indian River, Miami Dade and Broward Counties). There were also individuals from Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas.

III. PTA Prep Workshop

To address the declining graduation rate and the attrition of 20 students during the fall and spring semester, R. Kramer and Student Success Coordinator Dawn Janusz met and reviewed student exit interviews. Students gave a myriad of reasons why they were academically unsuccessful (health concerns, family illness, working too many hours, taking too many classes). Many of these explanations could be narrowed down to a lack of preparation to begin a rigorous health program. These students had been on a waiting at least one if not two years prior to beginning the PTA program.

Ms. Janusz suggested having the equivalent of a pre-orientation orientation where students on the waiting list would be given information to assist with planning for their two year matriculation through the program and R. Kramer agreed this was a great idea. Ms. Janusz titled the session “PTA

Prep Workshop” and the first workshop was held on April 25th at 7:00 pm. Topics that were discussed included: Program costs, financial aid, essential functions, class schedule, rigors of the curriculum and disability resources. A current PTA student was asked to attend the workshop to speak about a “day in the life of a PTA student”. Academic advisors were available after the workshop to meet with students if they desired.

Ms. Janusz sent out invitation letters to the 40 accepted students for fall of 2011, 20 attended. Students expressed to R. Kramer and Ms. Janusz how helpful this pre-orientation workshop was and at least one student made the decision to defer beginning the program until 2012 to allow for more time to complete general education courses.

Committee members agreed that this was a good start toward assisting students beginning the PTA program to be better prepared and help lower student attrition rates. Suggestions by the committee were made to place study time on the class schedule, place all of the workshop material on the PTA web page and to make attendance for those admitted into the PTA program mandatory at subsequent workshops. Mandatory attendance had been discussed by R. Kramer, D. Kuhn (Admission Coordinator) and Dr. Nicotera (HEC Provost) after doing a couple trial workshops and eliciting input from the attendees once into the program as to the value of the workshop.

R. Kramer also passed out copies of a recent research paper published in the Journal of Physical Therapy Education titled “Factors Influencing Physical Therapist Assistant Licensure Examination Success”. Data generated by this study supported the authors hypothesis that those students who achieved higher grades in Anatomy and Physiology I and II and who maintained at least a GPA of 3.05 in their PTA courses were more likely to score at least a passing score of 600 on the national licensing exam. R. Kramer suggested handing out this study to accepted students at “prep workshops” and at new student orientation would impress upon students the need to come into the program prepared. Committee members agreed.

Action: R. Kramer will look into putting material on the PTA webpage for those students who were unable to attend April’s workshop and adding study time to the schedule handed out at future workshops.

IV. Placement Testing

R. Kramer asked the committee their thoughts on requiring students to take a placement test with test scores becoming a component of the selective admissions process into the program. R. Kramer met with ATI representatives the day before to discuss the HOBET (Health Occupations

Basic Entrance Test). This test is intended for use with adult allied health program applicant populations, cost of the test is \$35. Material on the HOBET was given to committee members to read and further discussions on implementation will be continued at the fall advisory committee meeting. Committee members read through the material and voiced approval stating this would be a good tool to increase program preparedness and decrease program attrition.

Action: R. Kramer will begin discussions with D. Kuhn and Dr. Nicotera on implementation of the HOBET.

V. Student Uniforms

Ms. Hanlon stated the PTA Program is one of the last allied health programs at the Health Center to not require uniforms while on campus. Faculty have been reluctant to impose any additional financial burdens to students, however students seem unable to follow the dress code as is. Too much faculty time is being spent on counseling students in appropriate attire and the faculty would now like to move forward with a dress policy.

Ms. Hanlon suggested khaki pants, navy polo shirt and closed toed shoes while on campus. Lab attire will be black gym shorts to be mid-thigh and grey tee shirts purchased from the campus bookstore with PTA Program lettering. The Committee supported this change in dress code and the new policy will begin in the fall.

VI. CEU's for Clinical Instructors

R. Kramer informed the Committee College administration approved funds for clinical instructors to attend continuing education courses given by SPC's CE Health Department. For each PTA student a clinician mentors they will receive the opportunity to take one CEU course. R. Kramer will send out fall course schedules as soon as they come out for those CIs taking students during the summer.

R. Kramer also reported on discussions held at the last Florida Board of Physical Therapy meeting regarding CEUs for clinical instructors. Shelia Nicholson, FPTA President, approached the Board regarding their stand on providing CEUs to CIs. The Board appeared amendable to allowing this and agreed to further discussions at their next meeting.

VII. PT Labor Market Data

R. Kramer distributed labor market data for PTAs in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. Committee members agreed the average salary was accurate for current employment, but a bit on the high end for outpatient clinics.

VIII. Announcements

R. Kramer related the new initiative proposal for funding a physical therapist to staff a PT clinic within the PTA department was not accepted. The President felt there were more basic pressing needs in remedial courses and increasing college staff to assist with the greater number of students seeking information and enrollment.

Ms. Brush presented samples of new marketing material available to programs for promotion. She also was happy that monies from the Perkin's Grant were being utilized for PTA student tutors. She stated personnel from the Perkin's Grant visited the campus during the spring semester and met with PTA students who were very complimentary on the quality of education they were receiving in the PTA Program as well as resources available to assist them with their success.