

ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE  
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES, 5/16/2013

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Marlon Alaan, Sue Barber, Marja Beaufait,  
Winston Biltz, Teresa Chiavacci, Norman  
Schlact, Shamsah Shidi, Maryellen Sullivan,  
Tricia Trinqu

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

CURRENT PTA STUDENTS: Jeremy Richardson (Class President)  
Cathy Delgrosso (Class Treasurer)

MEETING TIME: 7:00 PM – 9:15 PM

I. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves and indicated their current place of employment.

II. Program Updates

Current Students

On May 4, 2013 the PTA Program graduated 21 students. This class initially began in the fall of 2011 with 40 students. The program lost 18 students the first year and 1 in the fall of the second year. The graduation rate for this class is 52.5%.

There are currently 33 freshmen. This class initially began with 39 students in August of 2012 (40 enrolled, 1 no-show the first day of class). One student from the 2011 class entered back into the program in January. Seven students were unsuccessful in their first year, all seven came from the wait list not the selective admission process instituted in the fall (pre-entry GPA and interview scores). If all students are retained, the graduation rate for this class is on track to be 82%. Faculty do not anticipate losing more than one or two more students at this point in the program.

The application period for the fall 2013 cohort closed on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Admissions department has not finished processing all applications, as of this morning there were 196 applications. Any

of the 48 students still on the wait list for 2014 will also be considered in the selective admissions process if they wish to try to begin the program in the fall of 2013. All students on the 2013 wait list have been contacted with only 8 responding they will not be attending in the fall and 4 have not responded back as of today.

#### Therapy Ed Review Course

As in past years, the PTA Program hosted a licensure exam review course by Therapy Ed. Nineteen attendees were from SPC and eleven were from other Florida schools, seven of those had failed the national licensing exam 3 times and were taking the course as a remediation requirement.

#### SPC Licensure Pass Rate Scores

All 23 graduates from 2012 have taken and passed their national licensure exam – all passed on the first attempt.

All 34 graduates from 2011 have taken and passed the national licensure exam, 33 on the first attempt and 1 after a re-take. Out of 259 US PTA schools, SPC ranked in the 84.17 percentile for First-Time Pass Rates.

### III. Observation hours

R. Kramer discussed that she and Dana Hamilton (PTA Staff Assistant) have received several phone calls and emails from potential students stating difficulty in finding area clinics to complete the application requirement of 24 observation hours. In an effort to gather some data on the benefits of students doing observation hours R. Kramer posted a discussion question to both the sophomore and freshmen students in their on-line classes asking them to reflect back on completion of this requirement: did the completion of observation hours enhance their perspective of the field of physical therapy and the types of interventions PTAs perform? Answers were compiled and sent to committee members in advance of the meeting. Most students felt the hours were very beneficial and necessary.

R. Kramer stated the faculty's reluctance to do away with this requirement and asked for Committee feedback on either reducing the hours or eliminating them.

M. Sullivan stated MPM OP has had to say no when applicants wait until the last minute and the facility is inundated with requests, but otherwise accept observers. S. Barber indicated the VA no longer takes observers due to all the required paperwork (background check, fingerprinting).

Committee members discussed if this is really the field an individual wants to pursue they will do the work to find a facility to complete the required hours and recommended against eliminating the requirement. They did however agree to revisit possibly reducing the hours if the program continues to receive many complaints of difficulty finding clinics willing to participate.

T. Trinique, M Sullivan and N. Schlact recommended making the observation hours a more active process by asking questions or having an outline on the observation form to give students more direction in what to look for. C. Delgrosso (student) agreed questions to guide observers would be beneficial.

Action: R. Kramer will discuss with D. Kuhn (Admission Director) placing directive questions on the observation form.

#### IV. Curriculum Change

R. Kramer related to the committee the upcoming change in the required pharmacology course for PTA students from a one credit to two credit hour course. The Program is unable to absorb any additional credits as 74 is the maximum allowed by the state for an AS in PTA.

Options would be for the PTA faculty to create a one credit hour pharmacology course for PTA students or incorporate the pharmacology into current courses and utilize the additional credit for something else. R. Kramer suggested the possibility of creating a one credit hour Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) course for PTAs. The justification for the creation of this course being FSBPT's recommendation for PT and PTA programs to improve their competency in this area (Faculty Newsletter 2012, Vol 9:4). R. Kramer presented an approved course outline for a current course being offered at SPC that is a generic EBP course in Healthcare to give Committee members an idea of what the course might look like.

R. Kramer presented the curriculum for other state college PTA programs in Florida and the US. Of the twelve PTA programs presented seven were state colleges in Florida – 2 had a specific pharmacology course and were the only two of the 12 that had a pharm course as part of their curriculum. None of the 12 offered a separate EBP course.

Committee members discussed the benefits of students completing an EBP course early in the curriculum to prepare them to engage in EBP during the PTA Program. Students J. Richardson and C. Delgrosso agreed this would be beneficial. T. Chiavacci stated another benefit would be the course assisting potential students to better understand the field of physical therapy prior to beginning the program.

Action: R. Kramer to develop an EPB on-line course geared toward the PTA. She will send out a rough draft for committee review sometime over the summer.

V. Program Equipment

R. Kramer was unable to demonstrate the new System 4 Biodex (still waiting for the required 220V line) but did direct attention to the new piece of equipment. Committee members were then asked about new equipment they are using consistently in the clinic that they would like to see students trained on. W. Biltz mentioned Game Ready as well as JAS and ERMI splints. Some clinicians are using inclinometers and there is an inclinometer app. S. Barber stated using the Flexinator with frequency as it is a good tool for TKR patients.

Action: PTA faculty will look into the purchase of these items.

VI. PT Labor Market Data

R. Kramer gave statistics from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity on labor market statistics for PTA's in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater area. The advisory board was in agreement that the salary information was on the high side with outpatient entry level wages averaging \$19 - \$20/hour. PTA job growth in Florida is projected to increase by 29% between 2010 and 2020 with a 46% increase in US employment.

VII. Announcements

R. Kramer announced the date for the fall Joint Advisory Committee meeting, Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Committee Members agreed to meet after dinner during this Joint Advisory Committee meeting rather than the usual November meeting time.

PTA faculty recognized R. Kramer for completing USF's tDPT program.