

Letter from the Chief of the Division of Physical Therapy

Burke Gurney, PT, PhD, OCS



There is much to talk about in The University of New Mexico Division of Physical Therapy. First off, the program was issued a 10-year unconditional accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Only about 1 in 10 programs is issued unconditional accreditation. Otherwise, CAPTE sends a

yearly progress report that amounts to a list of conditions, which must be improved upon to confirm accreditation status. We were very pleased to meet all of the requirements of CAPTE and achieve unconditional status for a lengthy term.

The graduating class of 2015 just finished the National Physical Therapy Exam, and 25 of 26 students passed. That brings our 5-year accumulative-passage rate to 98.5%! The program continues to exceed national-average scores in both initial and overall pass rates.

We are currently performing national searches for our last two faculty positions, which we hope to have filled by the end of the year. One opening will replace James “Bones” Dexter’s vacancy (of course, he could never be replaced!) and another will be a new role, that of an engineer. This new faculty member (assuming the 11th full-time position) will help with the more technical aspects of our Motion Analysis Laboratory. The hire is part of the move to take our research on motion and gait analysis to the next level. Speaking of which, the program had a banner year for research productivity, viewable in detail at our webpage (<http://orthopaedics.unm.edu/pt/faculty.html>). Finally, Fred Carey, PT, PhD, was recently promoted to Associate Professor in the Clinical Track! We now have five of our faculty members in senior status, an all-time high.

The Physical Therapy Program has launched its Faculty-Directed Student Instructional Pro Bono Clinic. The clinic is open twice a month on Wednesday evenings for two hours, with four patients (underinsured or uninsured) seen each time. Two first-year students are paired with a second-year student and faculty member to evaluate conditions and

provide home-based programs to treat these individuals.

We will move our classrooms into new digs by the end of next year. Construction on the third phase of the Domenici Building complex will begin shortly, in which we will have two dedicated classrooms. The rooms will be 20% larger than those existing, and we are looking into increasing our enrollment capacity accordingly. As a result of this construction, part of the west building of the Domenici Center will revert to its original design, that of a 3000-square-foot fitness center. This is worth mentioning because the physical therapy division will have a presence in the facility.

In the fitness center, our goal is to set aside 2 hours each Friday afternoon for exercise assessments of employees. A semi-private area will be set off from the main gym, in which two students and a faculty member will team up to help employees of the Health Sciences Center customize their exercise programs based on respective desires (and needs).

We are hoping to procure a free-standing clinic that functions as both a faculty and pro bono clinic. Right now, most faculty members are involved in clinical pursuits throughout the Albuquerque area, and we would like to consolidate our services. Additionally, this new space would help increase patient capacity of the pro bono clinic, thereby allowing us to treat patients on a weekly basis. Other ideas in the mix include PhD and collaborative residency programs with The University of New Mexico Hospital.

Ultimately, The University of New Mexico Division of Physical Therapy is proud of the many accomplishments—both present and in looking toward the future—of our students and faculty members. We found and will continue to find ways to better serve the communities of our students, profession, and state.

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