



PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

PTA PROGRAM UPDATE

Welcoming a New Competency Tester

The PTA Program welcomed a new Competency Tester during the Spring 2019 semester. Yvonne van Bochove is a Physical Therapist and Clinical Instructor at Bancroft. She has a plethora of clinical and administrative experience working with a wide variety of patient populations. She also serves as an on-site reviewer for the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).

The PTA Program ZOOMS!

PTA Program faculty have started to use Zoom video communications to allow students to attend lecture remotely. This has enabled students to attend lecture when they stay home with a sick child, have transportation difficulties or any other situation that prevents them from attending lecture on campus!

The PTA Class of 2020 has been accepted

The PTA Program received 66 applications for acceptance into the PTA Class of 2020 this year! All 66 applicants were qualified and eligible to apply. Twenty-eight applicants were accepted into the Class of 2020 and they are busily preparing for the year ahead.

PTA CLASS OF 2019 PROJECTS

PTA Club 2018-19:

The PTA Club has registered to participate in the Central New Jersey Brain Tumor Walk on Saturday, May 11, 2019 in Asbury Park, New Jersey. This 5K walk is sponsored by the National Brain Tumor Society and is intended for all ages to fund a cure for brain tumors. If you wish to join us for a beautiful morning at the shore, register at www.BrainTumorWalk.org/CentralNewJersey. The TEAM name is: MCCC PTA Club.

PTA PROGRAM ALUMNI NEWS

Anthony Porcelli, PTA, Class of 2011

Fellow Alumni,

My name is Anthony and I am a graduate of the MCCC PTA Program class of 2011. My professional career took a non-traditional path after graduating and this may come as a shock but I actually didn't even end up getting licensed. After I graduated, I started working in Business Operations for a home-health company that was implementing a new service line for patients with Medicaid insurance. This new service was called Individual Support Services and its focus was on teaching children and adolescents with developmental delays and disabilities techniques to perform their activities of daily living.

In my role in Business Operations, I drew upon what I learned at MCCC to provide input in regards to patient safety, ethical practices, billing, treatment approaches, and documentation. After bringing this service line on board, my company began working with a tech firm to create our own in-house Electronic Health Record that could capture all our treatment data and appointments as well as bill for them. My focus was on helping the developers to create the rules and functions that would govern our system. An example of my work was defining rules for how the system would calculate CPT codes in any given appointment. Once I started working on the technical side of things I never looked back and I have no regrets. It became my passion.

Presently, I am working for a company in the Flatiron District of New York that has created an Electronic Health Record primarily for Behaviorists to use when working with children on the autism spectrum but also is versatile enough to be used by OTs and SLPs. My role is in managing the billing component of the software for our providers and assisting with development and at times coding for new products.

I know this is a little off the beaten path from my coursework at Mercer, but I think it's important for everyone to realize that we are not limited in the ways we can help others or in our career paths.

Thanks and Best Wishes
Anthony Porcelli

NEWS FROM MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HIRED: New Dean for the Health Professions Division:

The Health Professions Division has hired a new Dean! His name is Kevin Duffy. Since 2008, Dean Duffy had been a faculty member at Long Island University (LIU). At LIU, he served as Director of Athletic Training. He also served as Assistant Director of Athletic Training, Health, and Exercise Science. Dean Duffy is currently a doctoral student at Grand Canyon University studying Organizational Leadership with an emphasis in Higher Education. He received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Athletic Training from LIU.

EXEMPT: Senate, No 1265:

The NJ legislature passed a new mandate that all community colleges that award associates degrees in NJ must not have more than 60 credits in their degree programs and all colleges that confer baccalaureate degrees have no more than 120 credits. We are officially exempt from this mandate!

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ALUMNI TRADITION OF GIVING

The PTA Program has been blessed to have graduates and learners who have generously donated to the PTA Program over the years. The PTA Class of 2010 donated the first Keurig to the lab (thank you Ryan Frischmann & Leslie Ziemann)! The Keurig has been appreciated by learners and faculty alike! Lisa Hermanns, PTA Class of 2014, donated a one-arm drive wheelchair, which has been used extensively since then! Amy Ramos, PTA Class of 2015, donated seven Littman stethoscopes. The quality of the instruments that the PTA learners now have access to enhances their learning tremendously. The PTA Class of 2016 donated the first full set of fitted sheets for the treatment plinths. Sarah Babbs organized the sheet donation and the learners have been safer and less frustrated during labs and comp tests! The PTA Class of 2017 donated a body blade and a portable bedside table. All of these donations have enhanced each subsequent cohort's experience throughout the professional phase of the PTA Program. Coming full circle from where we started, the current Class of 2019 donated a new Keurig that can make multiple cups of coffee due to its size and reservoir. We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to the generosity of our learners and graduates. We think of you often!

GIFTING OPPORTUNITIES

The Yarema Boskyy PTA to DPT Scholarship

As many of you know, one of our very own Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program alumni passed away this year. His name was Yarema Boskyy, he was 25 years old, and many of us called him Jeremy. After graduation, he worked as a PTA at Mercer-Bucks Orthopedics while continuing his studies. He earned a Bachelor's Degree from The College of New Jersey and his Master's Degree from New York Institute of Technology. Jeremy was one year away from earning his Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree. The "***Yarema Boskyy PTA to DPT Scholarship***" is available to students who enroll in a Doctorate of Physical Therapy program any time after graduating from the PTA Program at Mercer County Community College.

Please submit your gift with the attached form or, if you prefer, you can make your gift online at www.mccc.edu/give. When making an online gift, be sure to select "Other" and specify that you are making your gift to the "Yarema Boskyy Scholarship Fund".

The PTA Program Scholarship

The PTA Program offers leadership and academic excellence scholarships to graduating PTA students annually. Current fundraising efforts include selling water bottles in the PTA lab and selling "identabling" ID holders on campus. These scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate excellent leadership skills and excellent performance on practical examinations during their time in the professional phase of the PTA Program. For information regarding contributing to this scholarship fund, contact Professor Barbara Behrens at BehrensB@mccc.edu

PATHWAY TO DPT

We are excited to share with you information about our Weekend PTA to DPT Bridge Program curriculum at the University of Findlay.

The weekend curriculum is designed for physical therapist assistants who wish to become physical therapists. It is a post-baccalaureate program consisting of nearly three years of professional coursework, culminating in a Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) degree. Students in our unique program meet on campus in Findlay, Ohio every other weekend on Fridays and Saturdays. We have had students commute to our program from all over the country, including 42 different states. Clinical rotations can usually be done in the state where our students live.

A baccalaureate degree, in any area, is a prerequisite for application to the physical therapy program. This degree may be from another regionally accredited four-year institution recognized by the University of Findlay, or students may opt to earn the baccalaureate at The University of Findlay. The University of Findlay continues to offer a variety of ways for physical therapy applicants to take classes through traditional, weekend, and on-line courses. In this way, physical therapist assistants may continue to work in the clinic while completing pre-requisites for the professional level program. There are seven prerequisite courses required for admission to this program. These courses are in Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, Physics, and Statistics. Courses must be taken from a regionally accredited institution and be considered equivalent in their content. In order to determine if past or planned coursework is equivalent, students can work with our graduate Admissions Counselor. Additionally, one year of experience working as a PTA is required for admission.

Applications to the Weekend PTA to DPT Bridge Program are available after January 1 with a firm deadline of May 1. Professional classes commence in January. Amber Feehan is the Graduate Admissions Counselor for this program, and she can be reached at feehan@findlay.edu or by phone at 419-434-6933 with any questions or concerns. Also, we will be hosting 2 online meetings with a faculty member that are in open question format. You can enter a meeting at your convenience on the following dates and times via the links provided.

May 16, 2019 11:00 AM-1:00 PM <https://findlay.zoom.us/j/897073014>

May 30, 2019 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM <https://findlay.zoom.us/j/158224035>

The University of Findlay's Physical Therapy Program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; accreditation@apta.org; 1-703-684-2782 or 1-703-706-3245.

If you need more information, you may visit us on line at www.findlay.edu and type in the keyword: Physical therapy to be directed to our page. We also encourage visitors to campus, which would be another great opportunity to learn more about the University of Findlay PTA to DPT Bridge Program. Attached to this email is a letter with information directed toward students. We would greatly appreciate you passing this information on to your students.

Sincerely,

Harvey Wallmann, PT, DSc, SCS, ATC, CSCS
Director and Professor
DPT Physical Therapy Programs

Joyce Lammers, PT, MHS, PCS
Assistant Professor, Associate Chair
PTA to DPT Bridge Program

FROM THE FIELD

A typical day for me starts out....well, let's back track, because there really isn't a typical day for me! I work at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Somerset as a Physical Therapist Assistant. I work in both the outpatient clinic, and on the inpatient team. I do both each week, and many times, both in the same day. It can be quite a whirlwind, as I often have to adjust my expectations on the fly and improvise my daily schedule. As a person who doesn't like change, who needs a set schedule, needs structure, I never would've guessed a job like this would appeal to me. Now, I couldn't imagine a better situation!

I was uniquely prepared for this gig by my clinical education at MCCC. My second clinical affiliation was at a hospital's outpatient clinic and my third placement was inpatient at a hospital. Both those experiences were crucial to helping me adjust to the demands of my current job. Out of school, I knew I wanted to work at a hospital, and I was looking for an inpatient job. I had really enjoyed my inpatient clinical experience and since it was fresh in my mind, I thought it would be a great entry-level job. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to find an inpatient opening. I did, however, find an outpatient job at RWJ Somerset. Even though it wasn't my first choice of setting, it was at a hospital, and the schedule was perfect for my home situation, so I decided to accept. I spent the first six months or so working in the outpatient clinic. Once I was comfortable there, I was able to start my cross training on inpatient. When the outpatient therapists have patients who cancel or don't show up, they help cover the inpatient load.

Our hospital also has a steady joint replacement program. They recently began a new partnership with an orthopedic group, which vastly increased the volume of joint replacement surgeries. Each of the patients who have hip or knee replacements are supposed to be seen twice by physical therapy each post-op day. They are evaluated post-op day 0. Now, it's not very productive to tie up a DPT on two-a-day treatments, which keeps them from knocking out evaluations. Who is the perfect person to see these patients twice a day? The PTA! That inpatient clinical affiliation I mentioned before? Well, that focused mainly on a joint replacement program as well. I already had some valuable experience in this area!

Instead of a typical day, we'll talk about a typical week. I am still considered an outpatient therapist in terms of the staffing roster. If I am needed on outpatient, that is where I am prioritized. However, we have five full time outpatient PTs and several per diem PTs. We don't have the space for more than six therapists to work each day in the outpatient clinic, so when the per diems are available, to inpatient I go. I am almost always outpatient on Monday. Monday is also the day when six to twelve hip and knee replacements will be performed, so Tuesday is my consistent inpatient day. I will have three to six patients on my list that had joint replacement surgery, each to be seen twice that day. I will also get other single treat patients on my list to make my total treats between ten and twelve depending on the census of the hospital and if all the inpatient staff are present that day. Wednesday goes back and forth between inpatient and outpatient from week to week but it is also another heavy surgery day so Thursday is normally an inpatient day for me. Friday is another wild card. The exciting part comes when I have an outpatient schedule but people start cancelling. A cancel on any therapist's schedule is a chance for me to pick up inpatients. If my patient cancels, it's a simple decision; I just go to the floor. When a patient cancels on another therapists schedule, since they would prefer not to go to the floors, generally they will take one of my patients and I will go to the floor. Some days I will be back and forth between inpatient and outpatient multiple times that same day. It sure keeps the day moving and I never get bored!

One of the negative aspects of this set up is that I don't get to follow many of the outpatient clients for a long period of time. I usually only see them once or twice during the course of their treatment. This makes it difficult to be creative with their treatment plan or progress them and track their progress. However, since we all work together well as a team, I don't believe it hurts the patients. On the positive side, I often have patients on the inpatient side that come to the outpatient clinic for further care and I get to work with them in both settings. This is particularly fun with the patients who had joint replacements. The patients also seem to enjoy seeing me in both settings. I also get to use a wide variety of skills, see many different types of patients, and gain very unique experiences.

I am very grateful to the faculty at MCCC for preparing me with such a thorough education. I am happy with the career path I chose. I have fallen in love with this field and my job in particular. I don't know how long this "super utility" role will last, but I'm going to soak it up as long as it does!

SURVEY TIME!

Your feedback is crucial to our compliance with CAPTE Standards and our program's ability to make data driven decisions. YOU are the experts in contemporary clinical practice and we need your knowledge to ensure that our program aligns with what is being practiced in the clinical environment.

The PTA Program at Mercer County Community College spent the last eight months updating its program goals. To maintain our CAPTE accreditation (super important!!), we have defined the outcomes that indicate each goal has been met, the expected level of achievement and how we will know if the goal has been met. This is why it took us eight months to update our program goals!

Our first goal is "to maintain high quality PTA courses and instruction for a diverse learner population." Part of our definition of a **high quality course** is that "all courses within the professional phase of the PTA program will align with contemporary PT practice." Our expected level of achievement for this is that "skills that are tested to competency will align with contemporary PT practice." The way that we will know if this has been met is that "in odd numbered years, the program coordinator will survey the PTA program advisory panel, alumni and clinical sites to establish contemporary practice as it pertains to competency testing and practical examinations." (This is where you come in!)

Our second goal is "to provide meaningful and effective services and activities that support learner success and preparation for safe and competent clinical practice." Part of our definition of **safe and competent clinical practice** is that "psychomotor skills taught and assessed within the program will align with contemporary clinical practice". Our expected level of achievement is "skills that are tested to competency will align with contemporary PT practice". The way that we will know if this has been met is the same as goal #1: "In odd numbered years, the program coordinator will survey the PTA program advisory panel, alumni and clinical sites to establish contemporary practice as it pertains to competency testing and practical examinations." (This is where we need you!)

I don't want to overwhelm you with Surveys, but I do have four Survey Monkey links below. **I tried to make them as quick and painless as possible.** Your feedback is crucial to our compliance with CAPTE Standards and our program's ability to make data driven decisions. YOU are the experts in contemporary clinical practice and we need your knowledge to ensure that our program aligns with what is being practiced in the clinic. I thank you ahead of time for spending a few minutes on the survey links below. Feel free to share these links with other practicing PTs and PTAs!

1. Paraffin Survey Weblink: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WQBQB8S>
2. Comparison between competency tests and current clinical practice – Summer semester
SURVEY LINK: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SFKV95B>
3. Comparison between competency tests and current clinical practice – Fall semester
SURVEY LINK: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RZ8KSLC>
4. Comparison between competency tests and current clinical practice – Spring semester
SURVEY LINK: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TRTW98N>