



## **Faculty Senate**

February 1, 2006

### **Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee Four Hundred and Thirty-Ninth Report**

#### **Proposal for the Establishment of the Department of Physical Therapy as a Separate Academic Department**

At its meeting of January 31, 2006, The Curricular Affairs Committee approved the following proposal for the establishment of the Department of Physical Therapy as a separate academic department and recommends confirmation by the Faculty Senate. The proposal is in the format required by the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

#### **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**1. Name of institution**

University of Rhode Island

**2. Names of administrative units**

Kinesiology Department

College of Human Science and Services

**3. Title of proposed organizational unit**

Physical Therapy Department

**4. Intended date of change**

Upon Board of Governors approval

**5. Intended location of organizational unit**

University of Rhode Island, Kingston Campus

## 6. Institutional review and approval process

	<u>Approval Date</u>
Physical Therapy Program Faculty	March 3, 2004
Kinesiology Department	April 22, 2004
Human Science & Services	
Curriculum Committee	Sept. 14, 2005
Human Science & Services	
College Faculty	Oct. 19, 2005
Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee	January 31, 2006
Faculty Senate	February 23, 2006
President of the University	March 1, 2006

## 7. Summary description of the proposed organization change.

The purpose of this proposal is to change the standing of the Physical Therapy Program from a program within the Kinesiology Department to a separate Department within the College of Human Science and Services.

## 8. Signature of the President

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Robert L. Carothers

## 9. Resources

The organizational changes proposed herein require no new resources. The Physical Therapy Program has its own director, faculty, secretarial support, facilities, and operating budget.

## 10. Person to be contacted during the review

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## 11. Signed agreements for cooperative arrangements.

None

## **B. RATIONALE**

This organizational change is being proposed because the Physical Therapy Program can better fulfill its mission to educate competent doctors of physical therapy who can provide skilled patient care in a variety of settings, conduct clinical research, and provide service to the community at large if it is an academic department within the College of Human Science and Services rather than a program within the Kinesiology Department. The mission of the Physical Therapy Program focuses on professional, graduate rather than undergraduate education as is the case in the Kinesiology Department. There are no common students between the two units nor does faculty teach across the units. The reorganization will allow PT faculty to focus their efforts on continued development and advancement of the program, clinical and basic science research related to the profession and provision of service to the community and profession.

The Physical Therapy Program has functioned autonomously within the (Department of Physical Education now renamed) Kinesiology Department since its inception in 1991. It has had its own faculty, support staff, facilities, and budget from the very beginning as a requirement of professional accreditation. Further, due to accreditation requirements, the Program Director has maintained direct communication with the Dean of the College and was a regular participant at College Management meetings. A self-study report for the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education was recently completed in preparation for a site visit that occurred in September 2005. It was during this self-evaluation that the faculty recognized that the Program was intended to be a separate entity within the college from its development and that separation would allow for better overall functioning of the program. With the recent move from the masters of physical therapy to the doctor of physical therapy, the program is even more out of place being located within the Kinesiology Department. Separation will allow better collaboration between the Physical Therapy Program and other departments such as Communicative Disorders and Biology. This re-organization will simplify day-to-day operations and clarify evaluation of program activities because data will no longer be combined with that of the Kinesiology department. Please note that no new resources are needed to affect this organizational change.

## **C. INSTITUTIONAL ROLE**

This organizational change is consistent with the published role and mission of URI. The Department of Physical Therapy will have all of the responsibilities of a Department. In addition, it will provide added value to the University through its recognition as the only Physical Therapy Program in the state and via the clinic, which provides physical therapy to citizens of Rhode Island.

#### **D. INTERINSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The projected impact of this organizational change on the other public higher educational institutions in Rhode Island is nil. Other institutions in Rhode Island will not be affected by this change because the Physical Therapy Program is not a new program and is not competing with other programs in the state for students or resources.

There are no cooperative arrangements with other institutions relative to this organizational change.

#### **E. EVALUATION**

The Physical Therapy Program is fully accredited through the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Evaluation of the program is on going and includes both direct and indirect measures of clearly defined outcomes. Examples of outcome measures include the percentage of students who pass the National Physical Therapy Licensure Exam, the percentage of students who receive outstanding grades on the clinical performance instrument, a tool that is used nationally to evaluate the performance of students in the clinical setting, and responses from employers gathered both on surveys and in focus groups. Effective this semester, the PT program will begin using the electronic portfolio system recently purchased by URI called "True Outcomes". Data from these evaluations will be used to make necessary changes in the doctor of physical therapy degree program.