



December 6, 2023

Prof. Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dear Susan,

INTERIM MONITORING REPORT | Department of Physical Therapy

On behalf of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, I am pleased to provide an interim monitoring report for the 2020-21 external review of the Dept. of Physical Therapy (PT) and its program and to provide an update on the status of the MScPT program's accreditation. This report was prepared in consultation with the PT Chair, Dr. Susan Jaglal, MScPT Director, Dr. Sharon Switzer-McIntyre, Vice Chair of Education, Dr. Brenda Mori.

Status of Implementation Plans in Dean's Response

- EDI: Establish actions to support the advancement of the strategic plan priority to foster Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, ensuring consideration and application to recruitment, admissions, curriculum and research. Seek collaboration from other departments, the TFoM, and the Rehabilitation Sector to develop an EDI committee.*

PT hired an Academic Lead for Equity, Anti-Racism, & Social Accountability in July 2021 to advance EDIIA. As a direct result, an Equity, Anti-Racism, & Social Accountability Action Plan—framed by PT's strategic plan—was finalized in May 2022 after engagement with a broad range of stakeholders.

A new tenure-stream faculty member, Dr. Chavon Niles, was hired in July 2023. She is a Black scholar with expertise in critical disability studies and health equity. Dr. Niles will co-lead the integrated curricular theme relating to EDIIA: Social, Political, Ethical, & Cultural Dimensions of Health & Healthcare.

The Admission Committee submitted a proposal to PT in September 2023 for a coordinated action plan to review and revise the admissions process with the goal of implementing admission pathways for learners from historically marginalized groups (specifically [Black](#) and [Indigenous](#) peoples). Progress toward increasing learner diversity will be tracked using data from the Voice of the PT Learner Survey. These action plans align with Temerty Medicine's strategic priority: [Excellence Through Equity](#).

The MScPT will be one of the inaugural programs to launch at the Scarborough Academy of Medicine & Integrated Health (SAMIH) in September 2026. This initiative at the distributed site is designed to educate healthcare professionals who will provide essential care to the diverse community in Scarborough.

A number of PT learners and faculty are engaged in equity work across the Department, Rehabilitation Sciences Sector, hospitals, and the broader UofT community. Within Temerty Medicine, PT members serve on the Diversity Advisory Council and participate in the Community of Support, Research Application Support Initiative, and Summer Mentorship Program. They also participate in a wide variety of recruitment activities and initiatives targeting equity-deserving groups through the Black Physiotherapy Network and the Queer Physiotherapy Collective, among others. Several PT faculty are working with Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC) to develop two new EDIIA-related accreditation standards.

- II. *IMPROVE VISIBILITY: Redesign the website to improve information access for students, faculty and the public at large. Ensure that the updated research themes are on the website and improve the visibility and translation of research productivity to inform others of the excellent work accomplished.*

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION: Revise the student handbook and ensure resource information, academic requirements and advancement in the program are readily accessible, for example placing resource information directly on the website. Support students to utilize resources available to them for counselling and mental health support. Improve consistency of course postings and resource information for students on Quercus.

Launched in September 2022, PT's new [website](#) hosts a revised student handbook and updated research themes. Faculty profiles now serve as a conduit to promote PT's research productivity and achievements. Across both its website and the curricular Quercus sites, PT has ensured consistency in course postings and has enhanced student resources related to counselling and mental health.

PT and the Dept. of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy (OS&OT) have jointly hired a Communications Officer to increase the visibility of and promote the activities and accomplishments of both Departments.

- III. *BUDGET SUSTAINABILITY: Address the potential threat of loss of financial support to the OIEPB program. This is an important component of the Department sustainability and the loss would have substantial impact. Ensure stable budget support for programming over next 5 years and advocate for removal of the enrollment ceiling cap.*

PT continues to pursue provincial and federal funding opportunities to obtain financial support for the Ontario Internationally Educated Physiotherapy Bridging (OIEPB) program. PT has met with both federal (Valérie Litalien, Foreign Credential Recognition Program) and provincial (Minister Monte McNaughton and Deputy Minister Karima Velji) representatives to advocate for this program. A provincial call for funding is expected in early 2024; until then, despite the funding challenges, PT continues to run the program with reduced faculty to ensure that the needs of this equity-deserving group are not neglected. Concurrently, PT is working with Temerty Medicine's Office of Advancement to identify philanthropic support for the OIEPB program.

PT did not have the capacity to develop revenue generating continuing education programming because of the challenges of delivering the MScPT and OIEPB programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the base budget remaining consistent for over 10 years as the MScPT class size has almost doubled (from 60 to 110 students), PT continues to try to work with Temerty Medicine to ensure a stable budget model. Moreover, the Ontario Ministry of Colleges & Universities has lifted the enrollment ceiling cap and granted graduate expansion funding for 40 more MScPT students per year that will be allocated to SAMIH.

- IV. *PARTNERSHIPS: Develop collaborative opportunities to engage with other Rehabilitation Sector Departments in order to advance strategic plan initiatives, enhance interprofessional learning opportunities and optimize new donor support resources targeted for Rehabilitation teaching and research.*

As the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and Temerty Medicine's reorganization, some of the hallmark initiatives highlighted in the decanal response have been revised. COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for PT to engage in a variety of initiatives and partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and optimize new donor support targeting teaching and research, such as the following:

1. *UofT Curriculum & Licensing Alternatives (CLA) Working Group*

During the disruption caused by the pandemic, CLA served as a focal point for collaboration and cooperation to address common challenges across health science programs in delivering academic programs and identifying alternative pathways to licensure. CLA served in an advisory capacity to the Council on Health Sciences and liaised with UofT committees and bodies, including the Academic Continuity Committee. PT was actively engaged in this working group and took on several leadership roles given that it was the first academic department to return to campus to deliver educational programming. Two of the outputs from this working group are the (i) COVID Curriculum, an eight-module self-directed learning tool designed to prepare students for the clinical environment and (ii) COVID-19 Vaccine Curriculum, a five-module self-directed learning tool designed to prepare students to be COVID-19 vaccination educators.

2. *COVID & Critical Care Learning Network*

PT faculty, in collaboration with experts from across UofT and the Toronto region created an online education package to bridge knowledge from one's current practice to the requirements necessary to care for those impacted by COVID-19, as well as other critical care patients. These educational materials were widely distributed to all clinical staff in Ontario via [COVID&CriticalCareLearning.ca](https://www.utoronto.ca/COVID&CriticalCareLearning.ca). The resources on the site are for healthcare providers such as, but not limited to, anesthesia assistants, nurses, physicians, physician assistants, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, registered dietitians, and respiratory therapists who are involved in the care of COVID-19 and other critical care patients.

3. *Rehabilitation Science Research Network for COVID*

PT led a proposal to establish an international, interprofessional network for COVID-19 rehabilitation research to develop therapies and models of care that will improve recovery for people living with Long COVID. Co-directed by Dr. Kelly O'Brien (PT) and Dr. Jill Cameron (OS&OT), the network is funded by \$1 million from Temerty Medicine and will support research and training focused on episodic disability, post-acute support for caregivers, and communities hit hardest by the pandemic (e.g., underrepresented and low-income groups).

4. *International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR)*

Support for ICDR is an ongoing initiative across the three Clinical Departments and the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute (RSI) in the Rehabilitation Sciences Sector. When ICDR Director Dr. Stephanie Nixon (PT) stepped down in July 2021, the ICDR Executive and the sector engaged in discussions and consultations to identify leadership models and governance to determine the best structure for ICDR as a centre for collaborative interdisciplinary research and educational initiatives addressing issues of equity in Canada and the world. In July 2022, Dr. Tim Bressmann and Dr. Andrea Duncan joined ICDR as Co-Directors; Dr. Bressmann leads the research and Dr. Duncan the education portfolio. They have developed a new strategic plan for 2023-26 that includes creating new pathways for RSI faculty to link their research to the ICDR, expanding international fieldwork placements, and ensuring financial stability.

5. *Rehabilitation Sciences Sector Clinical Education Committee*

The committee continues its work to advance strategic plan initiatives and enhance interprofessional learning for clinical instructors. Site visits have been conducted to build partnerships and clinical education capacity with Michael Garron Hospital, Baycrest, and the Scarborough Health Network. Faculty development sessions for rehabilitation student education are being offered by the committee in the fall of 2023.

Program Effectiveness

PT has undergone an extensive accreditation process with PEAC highlighting the exemplary MScPT program. PEAC's Accreditation Committee conducted a thorough review of the program's documentation and awarded the MScPT program Accreditation Status at the level of Accreditation - Fully Compliant until July 15, 2028.

Temerty Medicine will continue to monitor the implementation of the review recommendations through annual meetings with the PT Chair. I would be pleased to respond to any further questions you may have related to PT or this report.

Sincerely,



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cc: Dr. Susan Jaglal – Chair, Dept. of Physical Therapy
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