

8-22-2007

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Recommended Citation

Office of Public Affairs, "Forum Encourages Students to Consider Careers in Physical Therapy" (2007). *Press Releases*. Paper 292.
http://opus.govst.edu/press_releases/292

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For Immediate Release

Forum Encourages Students to Consider Careers in Physical Therapy

University Park, IL, August 22, 2007 – The statistics underscore the need. In 2002 there were more than 137,000 jobs for physical therapists, but fewer than 100,000 trained personnel to fill them. As the population ages, as more trauma victims survive, and as more babies are born with disabilities, this need is expected to grow. Career opportunities for physical therapists are many, varied, and financially rewarding.

To help get the word out about career opportunities in physical therapy, and to help recruit minority students to the field, Governors State University and Project Purposeful Recruitment of Minority Physical Therapists (PROMPT) met this summer with more than 30 local students at the Kids Health Club in Homewood. Students learned from physical therapists and students about the difficulties and rewards of a career in physical therapy.

"This forum was a great success. Project PROMPT was originally conceived as collaboration between educators and practicing physical therapists to recruit minority students into physical therapy programs. We had a very good turn out of both minority and non-minority students who left inspired by the dedication and passion of the professionals," said Dr. Prisca Collins, professor of physical therapy at Governors State University and Director of Clinical Education.

Keynote speaker Robert Babbs Jr. of Chicago drew on his experiences as one of the first African American physical therapists in Illinois. He urged students to participate in professional organizations and attend a rigorous, accredited educational program.

Eric Warner, partner and Vice President of Operations at Accelerated Rehabilitation Centers based in Chicago, shared his struggles with students and encouraged them to take an active role in their education. He also suggested students seek the guidance of professors as he had when he was in school.

In addition to the speakers, participants also had the opportunity to speak with physical therapy alumni and students from the physical therapy program at Governors State University. Rhonda White, adjunct professor at GSU, advised the students to "Be assertive, be your best advocate, and believe you can do it."

Recent GSU graduate Amy Kim of Hoffman Estates provided insight on class and exam preparation. "Don't make the mistake of only studying to pass the exams," said Kim. "Study for your career because that is your bread and butter."

Current GSU physical therapy student Jamal Hassan of Chicago said, "GSU's physical therapy program offers me a high level of opportunity to challenge my knowledge. Anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and orthopedics are predicated on one another at each level. I am very excited about the program."

Governors State University offers a three-year doctorate in physical therapy program, approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Scholarships and grants are available for qualified students. For more information, call (708) 534-7290 or visit www.govst.edu/dpt.