ST. KATE’S PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT (PTA) PROGRAM IS UNIQUE

❑ The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program, one of the first established programs in the country, has been in existence since 1967. The PTA faculty is experienced and well-respected within the physical therapy community.

❑ Faculty includes PTs and PTAs who work together in the classroom to deliver content in a manner that replicates the PT/PTA relationship in the clinical setting. Additionally, students have the unique opportunity to participate in collaborative learning with fellow students in the Doctor of PT Program. These experiences have a significant and positive impact on the student’s ability to work effectively in the field.

❑ PTA students are exposed to the importance of the healthcare team early and often. The inter-professional approach to healthcare is enhanced by the opportunity to interact with students and faculty from the rich offering of healthcare programs at the University.

❑ St. Kate’s PTA program teaches students to be reflective learners. From core courses, students develop a holistic approach to deal with clients and become skilled in the interpersonal communication skills that are vital to the profession. Graduates are well-rounded from their strong liberal arts as well as the science courses that serve as the program’s foundation.

❑ Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (including human dignity, the common good, and action for justice) are embedded in the PTA program curriculum and serve as ethical guideposts for practice.

❑ Students will complete more than 600 hours of clinical experience which is integrated into their coursework.

❑ PTA advisors take a proactive role in meeting the needs of advisees and are invested in their success. Students are mentored on their development of professional behaviors. Faculty offer an “open-door” policy and the student ratio averages one to ten.

❑ Faculty members are passionate about their work, remain active in the profession, and are involved with professional organizations such as the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the Minnesota Physical Therapy Association (MPTA). They hold a wide range of expertise including eating disorders, physical therapy accreditation and governance, neurological rehabilitation, geriatrics, and orthopedics. They practice in the acute care, sub-acute and long term care, and outpatient environments.

❑ Pass rates for the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) exam of St. Kate’s PTA graduates exceed the accreditation requirements.
We get our students involved early on and provide opportunities that build on their strengths. There are statewide and nationwide opportunities available. For example, students can get involved in the Physical Therapy Club from the beginning. We encourage community involvement; we as a faculty, model this because we are so involved. We really walk the talk.”

Jessica Scholl, Assistant Professor

### SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

**Learn about St. Kate’s mission of social justice**
- Act on St. Kate’s commitment to justice through service-learning opportunities such as Volunteers in Action, Justice Learning & Outreach trips (coordinated by Campus Ministry) and off-campus student employment such as America Reads (coordinated by the Office of Community Work and Learning). Connect with CWL at the fall Activities Fair.
- Attend the Cornbread and Chili events offered by MIPS. Come listen and participate in discussions on topics of diversity and inclusion. Chili dinner is always free! Stop in anytime to learn about events happening in MIPS. Contact Coventry Cowens, MIPS Assistant Director, at x7866 for the schedule.

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

**Get involved in campus life**
- Serve your community on Citizen Katie Day in the fall. Join alumnae and your peers in this annual community service activity.
- Attend the Minneapolis campus annual Activities Fair in October. Learn about important programs of interest including Access and Success, Career Development, and MIPS. Meet with our larger community neighbors: Seward Co-op, Page Scholars, the Energy Assistance program, and Snap Benefits and explore volunteer opportunities.
- Attend the Minneapolis Activities Board (MAB) meetings; participate as your academic and work schedules allow.
- Familiarize yourself with the offices that will support your academics: the O’Neill Learning Center, Personal Counseling, Career Development, Multicultural and International Programs and Services (MIPS), Campus Ministry, and St. Kate’s Money Management program. Learn what services these programs have to offer.
- Check the schedule for weekly yoga and guided meditation classes offered through the Mindfulness Practice program as part of the Holistic Studies Program. All levels of experience are welcome.
- Attend the various community events sponsored by the Student Life Office throughout the year including “Chocolate Day,” “Stress Break Day,” mindfulness meditations, food, massage, and “Popcorn on Tuesdays” to name a few. These are fun opportunities to take a break from your academics and visit with campus community members.

### LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

- Apply for on-campus student employment. New students should contact Kathy Czech, Assistant Director of Financial Literacy and Student Employment at studentemployment@stkate.edu. Start your employment search by logging in to KatieCareer and completing your profile. You will need a résumé and cover letter to apply; staff in Career Development (Room 365 Education Building), can help you with this.
- Consider applying for one of many leadership positions on the Minneapolis campus: Student Life Assistant, Financial Aid Assistant, Admission Assistant, or Information Desk Assistant. Gain valuable transferable skills for your future: communication skills, organization and planning skills, peer counseling skills, and administrative skills. Inquire in the Student Life Office, x7831, Old Main, Room 227.

- Ask your advisor about the application process for attending the Minnesota Physical Therapy Association (MNPTA) annual conference as a student representative.

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**Fall Sending Ceremony**

PTA students will participate in this annual ritual that acknowledges the skills and knowledge they will bring to their first clinical experience. The ceremony allows faculty to “send” them into the clinic with important messages from a keynote speaker, recitation of the PTA Oath, and a frame for the role and work as a student PTA honoring the patients students will be serving.

**Options for Study Abroad Opportunity**

PTA students have the opportunity to study abroad in the Dominican Republic. PTA students will take a course that includes the DPT students*, providing an opportunity for DPT and PTA students to learn with and from one another in a common experience.

**PTA 2260 Learning & Service through Immersion (Dominican Republic)**

This course has two components: 1) a community work and learning experience and 2) an integrative seminar experience in which students will synthesize prior coursework in physical therapy practice, health care ethics, clinical education, and service learning experiences.

Using a case-based approach to ethical and servant-leadership issues, the seminar component will develop depth in applying theory and decision-making procedures to clinical, ethical, and social issues. Through small group work, discussion, role-plays, and reflective writing, students will synthesize service learning work with clinical experience and with APTA Core Values, Code of Ethics, Catholic Social Teaching principles, and the Physical Therapist Pledge.

* Other sections of this course includes a local or national immersion experience with all sections coming together for a final presentation at the end of the term.
Suggestions for making connections to your developing career goals.

“It is great to see the transformation that takes place in our students — from when they come in at the beginning, saying ‘I didn’t know I could teach’ and then all of a sudden, during or after their teaching experience that is required in their second year, they see themselves in a different light. Knowing they have the ability to help someone using their leadership skills or their teaching skill, really fires them up.”

Vicki Eggum, Instructor

ACADEMIC AND ADVISING CONNECTIONS

❑ Review your mid-term grades with your advisor. Identify the courses to take spring term. Identify any January courses that you will enroll in.
❑ Discuss opportunities for involvement in local and national conferences. Consider assisting with conference organization, contacting speakers, ushering, etc. These occasions offer great opportunities for networking and getting involved with professional organizations.
❑ Identify faculty and staff members from whom to request letters of recommendation. Discuss with your advisor what clinical supervisors would be best for your job search process. Begin this process early to provide adequate time for your reference writers.
❑ Review all program requirements with your advisor to ensure you have completed what is needed. Review the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (fsbpt.org) to begin thinking about the board certification process.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

❑ Consider attending the MNPTA conference. Consult with Holly Clynch, program director, for possible funds to support your attendance.
❑ Attend the Honors and Awards celebration in the spring; join your peers in acknowledging the scholarship, research, and other academic achievements of your peers in this important annual event.
❑ Before graduating, meet with the Minneapolis Financial Aid Team, x7805, Old Main 231, to review your loans and discuss the process for loan consolidation. Make sure you understand the loan repayment process and what your payments will be. Also discuss loan deferment if you plan on continuing your education.
❑ As you prepare for graduation, celebrate your connections to the University, including mentoring relationships with faculty and staff, and lifelong friendships with classmates.
❑ Become oriented to Alumnae/I Relations; learn how to become an active and supportive alumna of the University.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

❑ Develop important leadership skills through serving in a leadership position in the PT Club, becoming a representative at the state or national level, and participating in many other opportunities available in Student Life or off-campus involvements.
❑ Explore Assistantship Mentoring Program (AMP) opportunities with faculty in the PTA program. Expand your degree and your résumé by participating in this program.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

❑ Attend the annual Career Opportunities Fair on the St. Paul campus in October. This fair is open to current students and alumnae. Visit with employers for information and possible employment. Prior to the fair, visit with staff in Career Development to review your résumé and practice interviewing skills. (EDUC 365, x8121)
❑ Consider creating an electronic portfolio to highlight your skills, experience and accomplishments. You can develop components of an E-Portfolio by showing information and samples of your work from your LinkedIn site and/or you can use the D2L E-Portfolio option available on the D2L site in KateWay (search for E-Portfolio). Meet with one of the career counselors in Career Development for ideas about what to include.
❑ Following the Career Day presentation in PTA 2400: Capstone Seminar, meet with staff in Career Development to ensure you have developed a job search plan. If your plan is to continue your education, discuss your plans with your academic advisor.

“Our students have an assignment to educate various audiences about physical therapy to be completed by the end of their second year. We provide them these experiences and exposure very early. For example, students have been involved in Special Olympics, Lupus Association events, the Polar Plunge, etc. We try to expose them to all types of opportunities so that they can clearly see how they will use their degree.”

Patricia Magnus, Assistant Professor

Professional Behaviors for the 21st Century

PTA students are provided opportunities to reflect on each of these behaviors through self-assessment, as well as peer and faculty assessments.

1. Critical Thinking
2. Communication
3. Problem Solving
4. Interpersonal Skills
5. Responsibility
6. Professionalism
7. Use of Constructive Feedback
8. Effective Use of Time and Resources
9. Stress Management
10. Commitment to Learning
Get Involved in Your Profession

Gain valuable professional and leadership skills: talk with your professor about opportunities to present a paper or research at a state or national conference. Contact the Office of Student Live to seek University funding to support your attendance.

**PT Club** will provide you with opportunities to develop important leadership skills, and you will have opportunities to get involved in your profession. Past events have included serving as volunteers for the Twin Cities Marathon, Feed My Starving Children, and the Polar Plunge. PT Club members annually host a lunch for all first-year PT and PTA students to welcome them to St. Catherine University’s physical therapy department.

**American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)** is an individual membership professional organization representing more than 88,000 physical therapists (PTS), physical therapist assistants (PTAs), and students of physical therapy. APTA seeks to improve the health and quality of life of individuals by advancing physical therapist practice, education, and research, and by increasing the awareness and understanding of physical therapy’s role in the nation’s healthcare system. APTA holds two major national conferences each year: Conference and Exposition and Combined Sections Meeting. For more information go to apta.org.

**The National Student Assembly** is an APTA component comprised of all student members and focuses on issues relating to students. It is a united group dedicated to advancing the views and concerns of physical therapy students. The Student Assembly serves as a voice for physical therapist and physical therapist assistant students. It represents students from every accredited or developing education program across the country. Attending the conference as a student can be invaluable. For more information go to apta.org/studentassembly.

**Minnesota Physical Therapy Association (MNPTA)** offers high quality continuing education opportunities at an affordable price. MNPTA hosts a conference each year. For more information, go to mnpta.org.

Scholarships and Awards

Look for ways to excel and stand out to be considered for prestigious scholarships and awards.

**Founder’s Legacy Student Award**

In recognition of our founding mothers, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondolet (CSJ), the Founder’s Legacy Award has been developed for second and third year associate degree students.

**Minnesota Physical Therapy Association Outstanding Student**

This award recognizes one student from every physical therapy education program in the state of Minnesota (both PT and PTA). The attributes of an outstanding student: be a member of the APTA, be enrolled in your final year of an accredited program; actively participate in MN APTA; earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher; demonstrate community service, possess excellent clinical skills; demonstrate outstanding initiative, professional behaviors and responsibility; be self-directed in professional growth; seek and utilize sound scientific evidence for decision-making in providing patient care.

**Mary McMillan Scholarship Award**

This award recognizes students who exhibit superior scholastic ability and potential for future professional contributions. Each year every accredited PTA program has the opportunity to nominate one student for the award. Awards are made on a competitive basis and selection is based on: superior scholastic performance, past productivity, evidence of potential contribution to physical therapy, and service to the APTA. Visit the APTA website, apta.org for more details.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Faculty

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Extension</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holly Clynch, Associate Professor &amp; Program Director</td>
<td>x7823</td>
<td>867 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hmclynch@stkate.edu">hmclynch@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicki Eggum, Instructor</td>
<td>x7737</td>
<td>881 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vreggum@stkate.edu">vreggum@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Jonart, Assistant Professor</td>
<td>x7737</td>
<td>879 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bmjonart@stkate.edu">bmjonart@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita Klosinski, Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>x7825</td>
<td>855 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rklosinski@stkate.edu">rklosinski@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Magnus, Assistant Professor</td>
<td>x7828</td>
<td>869 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pmagnus@stkate.edu">pmagnus@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Nelson, Associate Professor</td>
<td>x7822</td>
<td>879 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:smelson@stkate.edu">smelson@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Scholl, Assistant Professor</td>
<td>x8155</td>
<td>557 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jjsolberg@stkate.edu">jjsolberg@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Van Grootheest, Faculty Assistant</td>
<td>x7750</td>
<td>863 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hvangrootheest@stkate.edu">hvangrootheest@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela Wilmouth, Faculty Assistant</td>
<td>x8124</td>
<td>859 EDUC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pjwilmouth@stkate.edu">pjwilmouth@stkate.edu</a></td>
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“We make a personal connection with our students. We talk to them about the things we do, we ask about their lives. This communication opens up channels for talking. We share a lot of ourselves with them and this allows them to do the same with us. This is a wonderful way to build trust.”

Pamela Wilmouth, Faculty Assistant

PRE-PROFESSIONAL YEAR

ACADEMIC AND ADVISING CONNECTIONS

While you are taking prerequisite courses prior to applying to this program…

- Begin your connection to the University through the New Student Orientation program.
- Review the PTA requirements document you receive from your advisor. Make sure you understand the rigor of the program and are prepared to succeed. Do not miss the April 30 deadline to submit your application to major form. Discuss your Mapworks Survey results with your advisor.
- Gain valuable volunteer experience in a hospital, nursing home, community center, school, or clinic to become aware of the healthcare environment. Develop a comfort level in dealing with diverse clients and take advantage of the opportunity to develop the strong interpersonal skills this profession demands.
- Strengthen your reading, writing and math skills at the Academic Success Center.
- Work to earn a solid GPA to be eligible for program admission (2.5 or higher) and to qualify for potential scholarships. See highlighted box on available scholarships within this document.
- Volunteer or work in a healthcare environment such as a hospital, nursing home, community center or clinic. In doing so, you will gain the benefit of additional awareness of the healthcare environment, ease in working with diverse clients, and the opportunity to develop the strong interpersonal skills the profession demands. By the end of your pre-professional year, you will have completed this required observational experience.
- Review the PTA Requirements document that can be found on the department’s website. Make sure you are prepared for the intense nature of this program. Watch and don’t miss the spring deadline to submit your application for being admitted to the PTA program.

St. Kate’s Resources for Financial Issues and Information:

The following support systems are in place to address students’ questions regarding financing college, budgeting, living expenses, credit card management, loans, insurance, credit scores and more. Check out these resources as soon as possible.

Minneapolis Financial Aid Team: Staff will help you look into options for financing college. Make an appointment with Kendra Reynolds, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, x7804, Old Main 231.

Peer Money Mentors and the St. Kate’s Money Management Program: This program provides a variety of financial literacy education and counseling. Contact the Office of Financial Literacy and Student Employment, St. Paul campus, CDC Room 210, x8685.

Confidential financial counseling: For individual counseling on credit card management, improving credit scores, insurance, loan repayment, budgeting, identity theft and much more, contact St. Kate’s certified financial counselor for an appointment, 1-888-577-2227. Indicate that you are a St. Kate’s student for preferred scheduling on-campus.