

## **The Extent to which the Rigor of Undergraduate Prerequisite Courses is an Indicator of First-Year Success in a Doctor of Physical Therapy Program**

### **Background**

Getting accepted into a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program is no small feat. Many students work tirelessly at the undergraduate level and even beyond, to get a shot at becoming a Physical Therapist. The path to DPT school is different for every student, for no one way warrants success. The journey to DPT school truly begins when a student decides they want to dedicate their time to completing their bachelor's degree and fulfilling the requirements needed for DPT school admission. Students can receive their bachelor's degree in any field they choose to, as long as they complete the prerequisite courses needed for admission into the school(s) of their choice. Most students choose to get a degree in an area related to biology, health, or exercise science; however, there are many individuals who choose to receive a degree in other areas such as the arts or the social sciences.

Prerequisite courses vary by institution; however, many schools are flexible when deciding which classes, they count towards completing academic requirements. A biomechanics class may substitute for a physics II class, business statistics may substitute for general statistics, a combined anatomy and physiology course may be acceptable, and so on. With the large variance of undergraduate prerequisite courses available, there may be some courses that may prove more beneficial in preparation for DPT school than others. There may be a way to predict success in foundational DPT courses based on the prerequisites taken for admission into the graduate program.

### **Purpose**

This study aims to determine the extent to which pre-requisite undergraduate courses impact success in the first year of a Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

### **Methods**

This study will use retrospective admissions data from the DPT department at Tennessee State University. The data collected will represent students that went to Tennessee State University and successfully completed their first year. The information gathered will be related to the names and course numbers of prerequisites, undergraduate prerequisite grades, and first-year grades in the DPT program. Using this information will provide better insight into whether there is a correlation between the courses a student took at the undergraduate level and

### **Results**

Higher-level courses that are more singularly defined within the discipline will prepare students better for their first year of DPT school. We anticipate that it would also contribute to higher performance – such as GPA.

**Discussion/Conclusion**

This study is important because prerequisite courses are an integral component of the admissions process. The results of this study will show a correlation likelihood of success in a DPT program; therefore, success in the program will translate into success within the PT profession.