



EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AT ZEFAT ACADEMIC COLLEGE

COMMITTEE FOR THE EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
DEPARTMENTS IN ISRAEL

Section 1: Background and Procedures

- 1.1 In the academic year 2019-20 the Council for Higher Education [CHE] put in place arrangements for the evaluation of study programs in the field of Physical therapy sciences in Israel.
- 1.2 The Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] participating in the evaluation process were:
 - Ariel University
 - Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
 - Tel Aviv University
 - Zefat Academic College
 - University of Haifa
- 1.3 To undertake the evaluation, the Vice Chair of the CHE appointed a Committee consisting of¹:
 - 1.3.1 **Prof. Stuart Binder-Macleod**- Edward L. Ratledge Professor Emeritus, Department of Physical Therapy, University of Delaware, USA-Committee Chair
 - 1.3.2 **Prof. Lori Michener**-Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy University of Southern California, USA
 - 1.3.3 **Prof. Yocheved (Yochy) Laufer**- (EMERITUS), Department of Physical therapy, University of Haifa, Israel.
 - 1.3.4 **Prof. Chad E. Cook**- Division of Physical Therapy, Department of Orthopedics, Duke University, USA

Ms. Alex Buslovich Bilik and Mr. Yarden Bialistok Cohen served as the Coordinators of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

- 1.4 The evaluation process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (February 2019). Within this framework the evaluation committee was required to:
 - examine the self-evaluation reports submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Physical Therapy
 - Conduct virtual site visits at 5 institutions participating in the evaluation process.
 - submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the academic units and study programs participating in the evaluation
 - set out the committee's findings and recommendations for each study program

¹ The committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- submit to the CHE a general report regarding the evaluated field of study within the Israeli system of higher education
- 1.5** The evaluation committee examined only the evidence provided by each participating institution — considering this alongside the distinctive mission set out by each institution in terms of its own aims and objectives. This material was further elaborated and explained in discussions with senior management, faculty members, students and alumni during the course of each two-day visit to each of the institutions.
- 1.6** This report deals with the **Physical Therapy Department at Zefat Academic College**. The Committee's visit to **Zefat Academic College (via Zoom)** took place on **28/2/2021-1/3/2021**. The schedule of the visit is attached as **Appendix 2**.

Section 2: Executive Summary

As external committee members, we take our roles and responsibilities seriously. Within this document, we make a number of suggestions that are designed to improve the faculty and student experience during the educational process. Consequently, all suggestions are made in good faith and are endorsed by the committee as a whole. We truly appreciate the opportunity to provide this feedback and consider it an honor.

The committee would like to thank the faculty and leadership at Zefat Academic College for submitting a comprehensive and well-written self-evaluation report. We believe the Department of Physical Therapy is doing an excellent job of meeting its primary mission of educating entry level physical therapy clinicians who strive to be life-long learners pursuing advanced studies upon graduation. We have divided our recommendations as 1. Essential, and 2. Important/desired. We wholeheartedly support that the recommendation marked as essential be carried out by the faculty and College administration. We believe the additional recommendation will improve the department's performance enabling it to fully reach its mission and goals. The body of the document contains further explanation of our recommendations.

The focus of the *essential recommendations* relates primarily to two categories: culture of assessment, and teaching. The committee found it essential that the department develop a formal ongoing curriculum assessment process which will regularly and systematically examine the relevance of course content and scope (ultimately reducing the number of program credits) and continuously update the program in light of current models of treatment. The department should also develop a mechanism to measure the attainment of the program's goals and student learning objectives. Such processes should involve all stakeholders, and periodically external reviewers as well.

The department is fortunate to have dedicated faculty committed to providing an excellent educational program resulting in the training of the future generation of physical therapy clinicians. However, our impressions were that teaching strategies both in the classroom and more so on-line are sub-optimal. We recommend as essential a careful assessment of the faculty's teaching strategies and techniques and the employment of additional training to its teaching faculty.

The focus of the *important/desirable recommendations* relate primarily to three categories: contribution to the population of Northern Israel, faculty positions and advancement, and research. As one of the stated primary missions of Zefat College and the Physical Therapy Department is to serve the population of Northern Israel, the committee has provided a list of recommendations that will help fulfill this important mission. The recommendations range from suggestions for increasing student diversity befitting the region's population, to a variety of activities that may contribute to the healthcare and wellbeing of the population of Northern Israel, while expanding the education and horizons of the physical therapy students. We also consider it important to offer the faculty feedback from multiple sources to facilitate their role as teachers, and to develop mentoring strategies that will facilitate the faculty toward promotion.

Part time positions in the department hinder the ability of faculty members to contribute to the culture, planning, policies, and assessment of the department. We therefore recommend increasing the number of faculty members with $\geq 80\%$ effort within the department. Finally, while the College is primarily a teaching college, it appears that both the administration and the faculty are interested in expanding their research. The committee offers several recommendations as to ways to achieve this goal taking into consideration the heavy teaching load of the faculty.

Section 3: Observations

3.1 Introduction

Zefat Academic College is a rapidly growing public college located at the gateway to the historic city of Zefat. Approximately 2,800 students are enrolled in the college's baccalaureate programs. A goal of the college is to grow the health sciences programs, with an eventual six of the 12 departments reflecting health sciences degrees.

As stated on their website and reinforced by students and faculty, the college offers academic studies in scientific and technological fields with the warm, individual support only possible in a unique, small setting. The vision of Zefat Academic College is to strive for academic excellence, serve the population of the Galilee, and as a significant institution its goal is to contribute to the academic system in Israel. There are many of the college's goals and objectives that are germane to this report. This include its intention to collaborate with the Bar Ilan University Faculty of Medicine in Zefat and with Ziv Medical Center in Zefat, in the aim of making Zefat a leading "health city" in Israel; and its objective to create regional, national and international collaborations to promote the vision of the Zefat Academic College.

The mission of the physical therapy program is to educate and qualify students who will meet Israeli and international standards as clinicians, and as future students in advanced degree programs (Master's and PhD). The aims and goals of the Department of Physical Therapy at the Zefat Academic College are to train the future generation of physical therapists while meeting academic and clinical needs, including the knowledge required to work as a young physical therapist in four core fields: pediatrics, acute care hospitalized patients, rehabilitation centers and outpatient clinics.

3.2 Management and Administration

The organizational structure is clearly described in the self-evaluation report. The Department of Physical Therapy is a part of the Health Sciences Departments. The Head of the Physical Therapy Department reports directly to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and then to the President of the College. Within the Department, there are 5 chairs/ coordinators/ representatives for: the college teaching committee, research activity and conference planning, departmental seminar, clinical education, and the status committee. The Head of the department is appointed by the Vice president of Academic Affairs and the President of the College. The process of appointing the Head of the department does not allow for faculty input. The current Head of the Department has just taken over in the last year.

Recommendation (Important): Develop a process to enable the faculty to have input on the appointment of the Head of the Department.

The Department of Physical Therapy has a BPT program with 168 students in the academic year 2018/2019. They have proposed an MScPT (non-thesis) to the CHE in September 2020. The faculty appear to be cohesive and indicate a culture of feeling like 'family', a notion supported by the Head of the Department. The support infrastructure consists of a secretary and department advisor. The support and infrastructure appears adequate for the Department's current needs.

Recommendation (Important): If the Department increases in faculty size, as recommended under the Faculty section below, then there may be a need for more administrative support.

Clinical placements in the north of Israel can sometimes be difficult to obtain for students. The Department is currently housed in the Bussel House complex, but will be moving to a new building in the Medical Simulation Building. The development of a Physical Therapy Clinic in the new building may afford additional training facilities, clinical placements, and development of collaborations for clinical research.

Recommendation (Important): Explore the creation of a Physical Therapy clinic in the new building. This will provide close proximity to the academic unit for clinical training for additional clinical placements and for the development of research collaborations for faculty.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.3 QA & Self-Evaluation Process

In the self-evaluation document the faculty indicated they are meeting their own mission, aims and goals. They base this on a report that 6 graduates completed master's degree studies, an additional 16 are studying towards a master's degree, and another 8 will commence their studies in the coming academic year (a total of 29 out of 215 graduates, comprising 13.5% of the graduates in this young program). They provide further support by stating the fact that 99% of the department's graduates passed the licensing examination and that 99% of the graduates were employed in clinical, instructional, and management positions. Almost 50% of the program graduates are from the country's periphery (Zefat and its surroundings), indicating that they have been successful in making the Physical Therapy program accessible to the residents of Israel's far north and may serve its surrounding residents should these students return to their prior residences. Thus, they state they meet the college's mission of supporting the Northern region of Israel.

It appears that the Vice-President and the former head of the Department wrote the report with input from appropriate faculty members. During the interviews with faculty most reported that they read all or part of the report. Although the report was generally well written and comprehensive, the major concern within the committee was that there was not a great deal of reflection on the part of the faculty members. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a mechanism to formally and routinely assess the program's goals and the attainment of these goals.

Recommendations (Essential): Create formal programmatic assessment, and measure the attainment of the program's goals and students' learning objectives on an ongoing basis.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.4 Study program

BSc Program

The Zefat PT program is the youngest of the five Israel PT programs, and as described in the self-evaluation report, was modeled after the previously established programs. The Department's teaching committee and Council convene at least twice a year to discuss curriculum changes with the process involving all stakeholders. (lecturers, the clinical teaching coordinator and the clinical placements coordinator). The major changes occurring in the last five years include the reduction of the total number of credits from 201 to 192, eliminating some redundancies between courses, and

increasing the number of credits of the clinical affiliations. Furthermore, during 2020-21 the teaching committee met at least once a month to determine the most effective methods to deliver course content in both theoretical and practical courses during the COVID period. While these are important positive actions, the impression during the face to face interviews was that there is no formal review process, no definitive time frames for a regular assessment of the curriculum (e.g. threaded content, relevancy and updating of course content, redundancies), and no tangible ways of refining educational needs. Furthermore, there are no clinical reasoning or formative assessment experiences for students prior to their clinical experiences. A formal structure is needed to assure that educational needs are met and that the curriculum remains comprehensive and updated.

Review of the curriculum and the various interviews we held indicate possible gaps in the curriculum. These include gaps in the areas of nutrition, health promotion, sports rehabilitation, and respiratory therapy. Students do not seem to have any exposure to research, or to electives. As the curriculum is overloaded as is, adding courses requires prioritizing certain topics.

Recommendation (Essential): Develop a formal on-going curriculum assessment process that is designed to evaluate the curriculum on a regular basis. Continue the process of self-evaluation with the aim of making further changes to the curriculum by systematically examining the relevance of course content and scope. Given the large number of credits, decisions should be based on the goals of the program, namely creating entry level physical therapists, whose knowledge and skills are embedded in current models of treatment (i.e. Evidence Based Practice, International Classification of Functionality, etc.). Incorporate further reductions in number of credits by prioritizing essential course content and reducing redundancies. Program should avoid emphasis on courses whose primary purpose is to allow faculty to teach courses in their area of expertise in spite of their low relevance to the goals of the program. On a less, frequent basis (i.e. every 2-3 years), an extensive review should take place that involves all stakeholders (faculty, clinical instructors, and student input) as well as external reviewers and alumni to provide objective assessment of the curriculum.

One of the stated goals and objectives is making Zefat a leading “health city” in Israel and creating regional, national and international collaborations to promote the vision of the Zefat Academic College regarding public wellbeing. The aspiration of expanding health sciences degrees in the future are a strong reflection of this goal. We are unable to evaluate how the department is meeting the needs of the regional population, including specific needs or specific populations.

Recommendation (Desired): identify for the CHE and on the Department’s website the unique contributions that the program is making to healthcare in northern Israel. For example, identify the number or percentage of Zefat graduates who work in northern Israel, or identify the unique aspects of the curriculum compared to other PT programs in Israel which are geared toward the population of northern Israel.

Recommendations (Important): The department should make a concerted effort to incorporate methods of serving the Northern aspect of Israel within their curriculum. This can be accomplished in several ways. For example:

1. Recommendation one includes the implementation of service learning projects (projects that involve identifying a gap in community services and then creating a plan to correct that gap) that address regional challenges in health and wellness. This could be an Interprofessional education (IPE) opportunity with the burgeoning occupational therapy department.
2. Recommendation two involves assuring that the faculty and students reflect the population in which they serve. This could be accomplished through alterations in the admissions processes and support systems which may increase the % of students representing minorities in the north.
3. Recommendation three involves modifying the curriculum to include coursework addressing special healthcare needs of the Northern Israeli population. This could include prevention and wellness, mechanisms for behavioral interventions, and use of alternative platforms such as telehealth (i.e., telerehabilitation). We suggest the faculty reflect on the needs of the community and incorporate the summary measures into the curriculum.
4. Recommendation four involves developing seminars/conferences/postgraduate courses that will serve the physical therapy community of Northern Israel.
5. Recommendation five is to explore the creation of a physiotherapy clinic in the new building (see also recommendation above). This will provide close proximity to the academic unit for training, additional clinical placements, and development of research collaborations for faculty. It could also serve as a site for students to “observe” or train in their initial two years to improve their context for clinical practice in years three and four.

At present, there are no coordinated attempts toward interprofessional education (IPE) for the health programs. The opportunity to incorporate IPE within the educational system is easier to perform in smaller institutions than when the size and number of departments makes retroactive coordination a challenge. The college President indicated that they will address this later, when they develop more health departments. There are no stated efforts within the self-study or during the interviews involving engagement of Bar Ilan University Faculty of Medicine that we could identify. Case conferences have been shown to be effective and could occur quarterly. It would allow students from different health sciences disciplines to work with one another on a fictitious patient case. It allows students to understand their role and the roles of others in the healthcare genre. The opening of the simulation lab may further provide opportunities for IPE.

Recommendation (important): Incorporate the IPE experiences with the health “city” vision. Incorporate “patient centered” (e.g., working collaboratively on a patient case) IPE, using individuals from the Medical School or the Ziv hospital to provide the medical component of the professions. Or, if there is no longer a goal to interact with Bar Ilan, then consider removing that objective from the mission.

MS Degree

The Department is preparing a non-thesis MS degree for approval, which was not presented to us. Discussion with faculty indicates a great interest in expanding the department by creating a non-thesis master program, to expand the knowledge base of qualified PTs.

Recommendation (Important) First, as non-thesis programs in other universities do not seem to attract many potential students, we suggest an initial needs-assessment survey.

Recommendation (Important) the Department should add at least one additional full time Ph.D trained faculty before opening such a program.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.5 Teaching and Learning

The report as well as our interviews with faculty and students indicate the strong emphasis the college and the department places on quality teaching. The faculty members seem truly enthusiastic about their role as educators of the future generation of PTs and this outlook is reflected by the students' perceptions as well. (further details, see section 3.8)

Meeting with the clinical instructors and faculty coordinators of clinical studies indicate that the students are well prepared for their clinical affiliations. The goals of the program are shared with the clinical instructors and the communication and collaboration between the PT department and the clinical sites are very good. The clinical instructors believe that the new form of student evaluation (shared by all the Israeli programs) is comprehensive and appropriate.

Through repeated questioning, it is clear that there is no formal assessment culture within the department. While there are teaching resources within the college, there are no mechanisms outside student surveys, licensure pass rates, and employment figures, to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

Recommendation (Important): The department should carefully evaluate, assess, and set objectives toward utilizing progressive teaching and learning strategies in their instructional methods. This should include online learning, flipped classrooms, a repository of video support tools for class and more problem-based methods of assessment.

Teacher training for on-line courses is provided by the College. As detailed in the study program section, the faculty intend to keep approximately 30% of instruction on-line. However, during our virtual visit, behaviors and comments by faculty indicated that remote teaching and learning techniques have room for improvement. It seemed that the online learning associated with COVID was suboptimal with teaching used on campus not well adapted to online teaching. While the college

offered online skill teaching training it is our impression that this was not effectively incorporated.

Recommendation (Essential): Re-evaluate the faculty's current online teaching strategies and techniques. Carefully assess the quality of the experience. Increase training for remote learning by leveraging resources in the College or external to the College. Re-employ new strategies for the planned 30% of teaching material (online) that is expected to be retained after COVID.

The department should be commended for introducing the first two clinical affiliations relatively early in the program (first semester, third year). This allows hands-on experience relatively early which has significant advantages (allowing early integration of theory with practice enhancing learning, and allowing the students to determine whether this hands-on profession matches their expectations before they are too far along in the program). To accommodate for this early exposure, the program is organized so that the essential prerequisite courses for pediatrics and acute care are introduced in the first two years prior to these affiliations. It is quite unusual in Israel to introduce pediatrics early on in the program, as this population is considered particularly sensitive and requires a wide perspective on multiple medico/socio-psychological aspects of health care. The chair of the program claimed that pediatric PT requires less 'clinical reasoning' than outpatient and rehabilitation care, and therefore is well suited as an initial affiliation.

Recommendation (Important): Review with clinical instructors serving all programs the effects of introducing pediatric affiliation as a first affiliation on the student's performance, learning, and ability to work in pediatric care at graduation.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.6 Faculty

There are 9 academic faculty in the Department of Physical Therapy. Currently, there are 8 faculty with $\geq 50\%$ position (4 senior, and 4 junior) in the Department of Physical Therapy. Three of the senior faculty members and all the junior members are PTs. Only one core senior faculty member holds a 100% position, and no junior faculty members hold a 100% position. There are only 2 senior and 1 junior faculty with $\geq 80\%$ effort within the Department. Of this faculty, there is a relatively small number that are lecturers (3) or senior lecturers (2); there are no professors. Although this is more than the minimal requirements of the CHE from college departments, we have concerns that the low involvement of faculty effort in the department and the commitments of most faculty elsewhere erodes their ability to contribute to the culture, planning, policies, and assessment of the department.

Recommendation (Important): Increase the number of the department's faculty members with $\geq 80\%$ effort within the Department to a total of at least 6.

Recommendation (Important): Develop mentoring strategies, to facilitate the development of faculty for rank promotion.

The Academic and Clinical faculty are assessed on their teaching effectiveness primarily with student assessments. The rate of student completion of course evaluations was informally reported at approximately 50 - 70% for most courses. If teaching evaluations are deemed 'poor', the faculty member will meet with the Head of the Department to determine an appropriate course of action to remedy the deficiencies. No additional feedback seems to be provided to improve teaching performance.

Recommendation (Important): Develop a strategy for incorporating feedback from multiple sources beyond just student assessments. Consider input from the teaching committee and peer evaluations, to facilitate a comprehensive assessment of teaching.

There are no opportunities for tenure or sabbatical leave for the Academic and Clinical faculty. Additionally, there are no formally organized plans for promotion of junior faculty, nor are there organized meetings to assess whether faculty are meeting the goals of the department and to discuss their own career advancement. Although the faculty indicate they know of the requirements for promotion, there does not seem to be an initiative to encourage faculty to work toward this as an expected outcome. Periodic formal assessments of faculty were not described.

Recommendation (Important): Develop and implement yearly assessments of faculty performance for teaching, research, and service. A scheduled yearly assessment, and review by the Head of the Department would provide faculty with regular evaluation and feedback on performance to enable growth and development. This yearly evaluation would also measure whether the faculty are aligned with program mission and goals, and whether they are on track for promotion within the college.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.7 Research

The 2019 self-study report noted that the research efforts within the Department have not yet resulted in substantial publications. The research productivity was not updated in the 2020 report and based on our meetings with the faculty the level of productivity has not changed significantly. Given the consistently high teaching loads, lack of substantial start-up funds (beyond \$8,000 per faculty member) and lack of dedicated laboratory space for research, it is highly unlikely that this will change in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the fact that the PT program is housed in a College and not a University, may make this acceptable to the CHE.

The Department of Physical Therapy will be moving to a new building that is currently under construction. The new building will have a simulation center and shared spaces available to use by PT faculty. Apparently, there will be no dedicated research space for physical therapy.

During the discussion with the senior faculty it was noted that the College provides adequate support for research in terms of statistical support, technical writing, and library services. It was also made clear that research and publications in peer reviewed journals is expected for promotion of senior faculty. The faculty's primary concern was that the consistently high teaching and service loads each semester do not allow sufficient time to be devoted to research. The high teaching load, and a lack of a clearly formulated strategic plan for research limits the development of research infrastructure and productivity in the Department.

Recommendation (Important): Increase the financial support for the development of research within the Department by creating an appropriate pool of funds that can be used by PT faculty members to develop their research programs. These funds could be managed by the Department head and allocated yearly.

Recommendation (Important): Develop a strategic plan for research in the Department that considers the facilities available for research, strengths of the present faculty and future hires.

Recommendation (Important): Consider using scholarly work other than research (e.g., dissemination of knowledge to the PT community at large) as a metric for promotion.

3.8 Students

The college is a teaching institution and it endeavors to offer academic studies in scientific and technological fields in a warm, individualized support system. During our discussion with the core faculty, alumni, students, clinical instructors, and adjunctive faculty, it is clear that this is a strong point of the college. The students spoke very positively about how quickly faculty responded to their queries and how they felt appreciated by the faculty, and how much they cared for the faculty as well. Although none of the students were aware of the college or department's mission, they did feel that the department was living the mission.

The students and alumni indicated they felt very prepared by the curriculum. They reported a moderate amount of well-organized repetition within the program; and provisions of unique perspectives by the faculty on repetitive material. They felt the first two years were intensive (35 to 40 hours in class a week) but also felt the intensiveness was necessary. A majority of the students felt that the college provided good student support services, although there was some concern that the college had no formal student association.

Recommendations (desirable): Consider incorporating a formal student association within the college with representatives from each of the departments.

The admissions process appears to involve passive recruitment (e.g. advertisements in high schools). Although difficult to fully elucidate, it is clear that psychometric scores dominate the selection process. Arabs are 5.8% of the study body, but are 40% of the population in this area. The self-study document spoke of efforts to recruit Arabs, however it appears that more effective strategies are needed. Further, this selection appears to be driven by the head of the department.

Recommendations (Important): Create an admissions strategy that is more holistic, is not solely dependent on psychometric results, but includes other elements as well (e.g., student experiences, prior employment, etc.). It may be beneficial to coincide admissions strategies with diversity initiatives as well, which appears to be reflective of the mission of the college. Thus, explore initiatives to generate interest in the profession of physical therapy among Arab high school students who could meet the initial criteria for program entry.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.9 Infrastructure

As noted above, a new medical simulation center is under construction. The center will provide outstanding opportunities for clinical training and interprofessional education. It was noted by the Department Head and faculty that there will be no dedicated research labs in the new building for the PT faculty (see research section). Given the current research interests of the faculty, this was not identified as a concern. Laboratory and classrooms for teaching are large and were reported to be appropriately equipped.

Recommendations: None. There are no specific recommendations regarding infrastructure at this time.

In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Zefat College clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

Section 4: Recommendations

Essential

1. Create formal programmatic assessment, and measure the attainment of the program's goals and students' learning objectives on an ongoing basis.
2. Develop a formal on-going curriculum assessment process that is designed to evaluate the curriculum on a regular basis. Continue the process of self-evaluation with the aim of making further changes to the curriculum by

systematically examining the relevance of course content and scope. Given the large number of credits, decisions should be based on the goals of the program, namely creating entry level physical therapists, whose knowledge and skills are embedded in current models of treatment (i.e. Evidence Based Practice, International Classification of Functionality, etc.). Incorporate further reductions in number of credits by prioritizing essential course content and reducing redundancies. Program should avoid emphasis on courses whose primary purpose is to allow faculty to teach courses in their area of expertise in spite of their low relevance to the goals of the program. On a less frequent basis (i.e. every 2-3 years), an extensive review should take place that involves all stakeholders (faculty, clinical instructors, and student input) as well as external reviewers and alumni to provide objective assessment of the curriculum.

3. Re-evaluate the faculty's current online teaching strategies and techniques. Carefully assess the quality of the experience. Increase training for remote learning by leveraging resources in the College or external to the College. Re-employ new strategies for the planned 30% of teaching material (online) that is expected to be retained after COVID.

Important

1. Develop a process to enable the faculty to have input on the appointment of the Head of the Department
2. If the Department increases in faculty size, as recommended under the Faculty section below, then there may be a need for more administrative support.
3. Explore the creation of a Physical Therapy clinic in the new building. This will provide close proximity to the academic unit for clinical training for additional clinical placements and for the development of research collaborations for faculty.
4. The department should make a concerted effort to incorporate methods of serving the Northern aspect of Israel within their curriculum. This can be accomplished in several ways. For example:
 1. Recommendation one includes the implementation of service learning projects (projects that involve identifying a gap in community services and then creating a plan to correct that gap) that address regional challenges in health and wellness. This could be an Interprofessional education (IPE) opportunity with the burgeoning occupational therapy department.
 2. Recommendation two involves assuring that the faculty and students reflect the population in which they serve. This could be accomplished through alterations in the admissions processes and support systems which may increase the % of students representing minorities in the north.
 3. Recommendation three involves modifying the curriculum to include coursework addressing special healthcare needs of the Northern Israeli population. This could include prevention and wellness, mechanisms for behavioral interventions, and use of alternative platforms such as telehealth

- (i.e., telerehabilitation). We suggest the faculty reflect on the needs of the community and incorporate the summary measures into the curriculum.
4. Recommendation four involves developing seminars/conferences/postgraduate courses that will serve the physical therapy community of Northern Israel.
 4. Recommendation five is to explore the creation of a physiotherapy clinic in the new building (see also recommendation above). This will provide close proximity to the academic unit for training, additional clinical placements, and development of research collaborations for faculty. It could also serve as a site for students to “observe” or train in their initial two years to improve their context for clinical practice in years three and four.
 5. Incorporate the IPE experiences with the health “city” vision. Incorporate “patient centered” (e.g., working collaboratively on a patient case) IPE, using individuals from the Medical School or the Ziv hospital to provide the medical component of the professions. Or, if there is no longer a goal to interact with Bar Ilan, then consider removing that objective from the mission.
 6. First, as non-thesis programs in other universities do not seem to attract many potential students, we suggest an initial needs-assessment survey.
 7. the Department should add at least one additional full time Ph.D trained faculty before opening such a program.
 8. The department should carefully evaluate, assess, and set objectives toward utilizing progressive teaching and learning strategies in their instructional methods. This should include online learning, flipped classrooms, a repository of video support tools for class and more problem-based methods of assessment.
 9. Review with clinical instructors serving all programs the effects of introducing pediatric affiliation as a first affiliation on the student’s performance, learning, and ability to work in pediatric care at graduation.
 10. Increase the number of the department’s faculty members with $\geq 80\%$ effort within the Department to a total of at least 6.
 11. Develop mentoring strategies, to facilitate the development of faculty for rank promotion.
 12. Develop a strategy for incorporating feedback from multiple sources beyond just student assessments. Consider input from the teaching committee and peer evaluations, to facilitate a comprehensive assessment of teaching.
 13. Develop and implement yearly assessments of faculty performance for teaching, research, and service. A scheduled yearly assessment, and review by the Head of the Department would provide faculty with regular evaluation and feedback on performance to enable growth and development. This yearly evaluation would also measure whether the faculty are aligned with program mission and goals, and whether they are on track for promotion within the college.
 14. Increase the financial support for the development of research within the Department by creating an appropriate pool of funds that can be used by PT faculty members to develop their research programs. These funds could be managed by the Department head and allocated yearly.

15. Develop a strategic plan for research in the Department that considers the facilities available for research, strengths of the present faculty and future hires.
16. Consider using scholarly work other than research (e.g., dissemination of knowledge to the PT community at large) as a metric for promotion.
17. Create an admissions strategy that is more holistic, is not solely dependent on psychometric results, but includes other elements as well (e.g., student experiences, prior employment, etc.). It may be beneficial to coincide admissions strategies with diversity initiatives as well, which appears to be reflective of the mission of the college. Thus, explore initiatives to generate interest in the profession of physical therapy among Arab high school students who could meet the initial criteria for program entry.

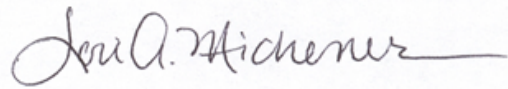
Desirable

1. identify for the CHE and on the Department's website the unique contributions that the program is making to healthcare in northern Israel. For example, identify the number or percentage of Zefat graduates who work in northern Israel, or identify the unique aspects of the curriculum compared to other PT programs in Israel which are geared toward the population of northern Israel.
2. Consider incorporating a formal student association within the college with representatives from each of the departments.

Signed by:



Prof., Stuart Binder-MacLeod
Chair



Prof. Lori A. Michener



Prof. Chad Cook



Prof. Yocheved Laufer

Appendix 1 – Letter of appointment



January 2020

Prof. Emeritus Stuart Binder Macleod
Department of physical therapy
University of Delaware
USA

Dear Professor,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies, to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel, and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

As part of this important endeavor we reach out to world renowned academicians to help us meet the challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial enterprise.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as a member of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of **Physical Therapy** departments. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Lori Michener, prof. Chad Cook, and prof. Yocheved Laufer.

Ms. Alex Buslovich Bilik will be the coordinator of the Committee.

Details regarding the operation of the committee and its mandate are provided in the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

Prof. Ido Perlman
Vice Chair,
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Dr. Varda Ben-Shaul, Deputy Director-General for QA, CHE
Ms. Alex Buslovich Bilik, Committee Coordinator

Appendix 2 -

<u>Physical Therapy Evaluation Committee - Schedule of online visit</u> <u>Tzfat Academic College</u>		
Sunday, February 28 th , 2021		
*The visit will be divided into 2 half days, starting at 17:00 (Israel time)		
*Meetings are conducted in a Q&A format		
Time	Subject	Participants
17:00- 17:30	Opening session with the heads of the institution	1. Prof. Aharon Kellerman – President 2. Prof. Rabia Khalaila – VP for Academic Affairs 3. Shlomi Ben Non – Director 4. Shai Sruogo – Deputy Director of Academic Management 5. Dr. Felix Kaplan – Academic Secretary
17:30- 18:00	Presentation by the Head of the Department of physical therapy *	Dr. Janan Abbas
18:00- 18:15	Break	
18:15- 18:45	Meeting with the Head of the Department of physical therapy (Q&A)*	Dr. Janan Abbas Dr. Kamal Hamoud
18:45- 19:15	Meeting with Adjunct academic staff *	Dr. Amira Daher Dr. Gil Shmuely-Leichtag Mr. Saher Abu-Leil
19:15- 19:30	Virtual tour*** of facilities and infrastructure followed by a short Q&A*	

Monday, March 1st, 2021

17:00-18:00	Meeting with senior academic staff * (including academic heads of programs)	Dr. Janan Abbas Dr. Michal Aharonowiz Dr. Tal Raifman Dr. Hadas Ofek
18:00-18:15	break	
18:15-18:45	Meeting with instructors/Clinical instructors/Clinical center heads*	Ms. Ruth Kallevag (clinical instructors' coordinator) Ms. Ofer Rockman Mr. Gilad Sorek Ms. Susi Retner Ms. Hagit Lustigman
18:45-19:00	break	
19:00-19:30	Meeting with BA students**	<u>Students:</u> ***
19:00-19:30	Meeting with Alumni**	<u>Alumni:</u> ***
19:30-20:00	Meeting with MA students**	Parallel sessions
19:30-20:00	Meeting with <u>Ph.D</u> students**	Up to 8 participants