

# RESPONDING TO COVID-19: EXPERIENCES OF A CANADIAN PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

SUE MURPHY (B.H.SC (PT), M.ED); ALISON GREIG (BSC PT, PHD);  
KAREN SAUVE (BSC PT, MSC)



# TODAY' S PRESENTATION

1. Explore administrative considerations for Physical Therapy program delivery in the wake of COVID-19
2. Highlight changes to the Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) curriculum, including impacts for delivery and teaching and learning experience
3. Discuss the clinical education model and the challenges imposed by university and government directives due to COVID-19



# UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



# UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (2018-2019)

- 64,798 students (Vancouver: 54,863; Okanagan: 9,935)
  - 17, 225 international students from over 160 countries
- 16,891 faculty and staff
- 13,778 degrees granted
- 339,000+ alumni in more than 140 countries
- 669.1 million in research funding for 9,544 projects
- 1,391 research projects with industry partners
- 1,179 research contracts and agreements with government and non-profits
- \$2.8 billion annual consolidated budget



# FACULTY OF MEDICINE PROGRAMS

- MD Undergraduate Program
- Master of Physical Therapy
- Master of Occupational Therapy
- Masters of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
- Master of Medical Genetics
- Bachelor of Midwifery
- Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science



# MASTER OF PHYSICAL THERAPY – COVID TIMELINE

- March 14 – moved to online / remote teaching and working, and clinical placements cancelled



## Implications:

- Academic: Year one students were in the last 2 weeks of term
- Clinical: Year 2 students were in the last week of their 4th clinical rotation (out of 6)

## Immediate actions:

- Academic - Teaching was provided remotely / online; no onsite classes or exams
- Clinical – Students were removed from placement and granted credit for the rotation; will make up the 4 days missed in future rotations

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Online through summer +/- clinical placements
- September – options:
  - Back to normal (unlikely)
  - “Hybrid” model – theory online, labs in person (+/- social distancing and PPE)
  - Remain fully online
- Various factors will determine feasibility / options for running the program



# ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

All aspects of the program and program delivery are affected:

- Students
  - Current and incoming cohorts
- Instructors
- Curriculum
  - Academic and Clinical
- Space
- Equipment
  - Potential need for PPE
- Budget





## CURRENT STUDENTS

- Ability to continue studies
  - Child care – is it available?
  - Work – will students have to work to provide income if others in their household are unable to?
  - May need to looking after family / relatives / friends who may be in quarantine or sick – takes time away from studies
- Effects of Delayed Graduation
  - What is the University policy if their program of study is lengthened (i.e. do they have to pay tuition for an extra term or two? Is this affordable for students?)
  - Can students afford to stay in school longer rather than working?
- Will students feel “safe” in returning to class if they are, or have family members at home who are, high risk?



# INCOMING STUDENTS

- Technology (additional expense)
  - Stable Internet connection, laptops
- Willingness to pay full tuition for on-line education
  - May be perceived as “inferior”
- Possible requests for deferrals
  - Not normally offered – is new policy needed? Will this set as precedent?
- Orientation
  - How do we create a level of trust / comfort / connectedness between a new cohort of students online



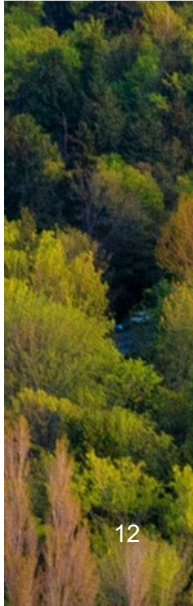
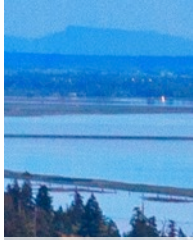
# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Will students be able to attend?
  - Visas / Travel restrictions
  - Quarantine / Isolation requirements on arrival
- Funding
  - If students start their program online from another country, how does this affect grants / funding?
- Effect on University / program budget if lose International tuition



# STUDENT HOUSING & TRAVEL

- Will students be comfortable travelling on transit? (Will transit be available?)
- How is student housing affected if social distancing is required?



# INSTRUCTORS

- Are instructors able / willing to teach online?
  - Potential additional costs / time / resources required
- Will instructors be available to multiple teach if needed?
  - If restrictions on class size or social distancing, may need to double / multiple teach labs
  - May be re-opening up their own clinics or working extra shifts in public settings
  - Teaching hours may change
    - Evenings and weekends / additional hours



# PHYSICAL SPACE

- Imposed occupancy limits (eg: by Government, Worksafe)
  - Are labs and classrooms big enough to house all students if social distancing is required? If not, does this mean classes will need to be repeated for smaller groups of students? Or are there options for larger physical spaces that can be used?
  - If classes are repeated, is there sufficient instructor availability to do this?
  - If classes are repeated, what does the schedule look like? (3 hour lab repeated 4 times = 12 hours of lab time – will students want to / be able to be in lab at 7 am / 7 pm or on weekends?)
- If PPE is required, is there appropriate space for donning / doffing / storing the PPE?



# EQUIPMENT - PPE

- If PPE is required
  - Is supply available?
  - Who provides / pays?
    - Clinical / academic settings? University, hospital / clinic, student?
  - Do students / faculty need additional training in use of PPE?
  - Does donning / doffing increase time needed for lab / practical teaching?
    - Is there space / safe area for donning and doffing?
  - Disposal & / or cleaning - method and costs?



# ADDITIONAL CLEANING OF PHYSICAL SPACES AND EQUIPMENT

- Will labs & physical spaces need to be cleaned between student groups / cohorts?
  - What type of cleaning will be needed?
- Who does this –are there sufficient custodial staff for all programs on campus and will they be available at appropriate times? Can students participate?
- Who pays?





# BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

## Potential Cost Savings (online)

- CSAs / Lab Assists
- Cleaning of equipment and facilities
- Heat / light / other utilities
- Building maintenance

## Potential Additional Costs (hybrid)

- Technology
- Double / triple teaching
- Additional cleaning
- PPE
- Additional pay for instructors to put courses on line
- ?Tuition decrease



# TUITION FEE CONSIDERATIONS

- Will students be able / willing to pay for an extended length program?
  - If on leave, will they pay a retainer?
- Will students be willing to pay the same fee for online as in person?
- Potential loss of tuition revenue from both domestic and International students

