

Pre-Physical Therapy

“In addition to getting students academically qualified for graduate study in physical therapy, we help them navigate the complex tasks of preparing for and applying to physical therapy programs.”
Jai Shanata, advisor, Dimensions Program for Health Professions.

Cornell offers exceptional support to students interested in physical therapy and other health-related professions through the Dimensions Program for Health Professions.

PREPARING FOR PT SCHOOL AT CORNELL COLLEGE

Like all health professions, preparing for Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs requires extensive study in the sciences. DPT programs are highly competitive and require a bachelor's degree for admission and a series of prerequisites.

Depending upon your interests, you can seek advanced certification in a clinical specialty such as orthopaedics, neurology, cardiopulmonary, pediatrics, geriatrics, or sports therapy after completing a DPT program.

Many Cornell students interested in physical therapy double major. These majors typically include some combination of kinesiology, biology, psychology, or biochemistry and molecular biology.

PREREQUISITE COURSEWORK

DPT programs pay attention to a student's academic record and seek well-rounded applicants interested in science who can also work well with people. Prerequisites for DPT programs include biology, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, physics, psychology, statistics, and courses in the social sciences. Because not all physical therapy programs require the same prerequisites, it is best to start working with the Associate Director of Dimensions during your second year on campus to explore

programs and check specific school prerequisites.

The average cumulative GPA of those accepted into DPT programs is 3.5 or higher. A list of common DPT program prerequisites can be found on the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) website.

ADMISSIONS EXAMINATION

GRADUATE RECORD EXAM (GRE)

Most DPT programs require the GRE administered by the Educational Testing Service for admission. A competitive composite GRE score of 1000 or higher is required by most DPT programs.

Dimensions has additional resources that can assist you in preparing to apply to DPT programs including GRE test preparation books and one-on-one mentoring to develop an individualized study plan.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students applying to DPT programs nationwide utilize the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service. Dimensions is your primary source for information when you reach the planning stage for your DPT application.

DIMENSIONS PROGRAM FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Dimensions helps students prepare for successful careers in the health professions. It does so by helping students integrate the scientific knowledge they require to do well in medical programs with the humanistic and practical knowledge they will need to work with patients and become successful healthcare providers.

Dimensions expands on Cornell's strong foundation in the liberal arts and natural sciences to provide students a wealth of immersive learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom. These include support for interdisciplinary courses such as

Faculty Bios & Courses

PROGRAM ADVISORS

KRISTI MEYER, DPT, SCS, ATC

Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, Physical Therapist
Teaches courses in anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, nutrition, and exercise testing and prescription. Licensed Physical Therapist, Board Certified Specialist in Sports Physical Therapy, and involved in research on ACL injuries in the female athlete, and kinesthetic classrooms. D.P.T., University of Minnesota.

JAI SHANATA

Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Advisor of Dimensions Program
Teaches courses in Organic Chemistry, Chemical Principles I and II, First Year Seminar and an advanced topics course in pharmacology and chemical biology. Ph.D., chemistry, California Institute of Technology.

AFFILIATED FACULTY

JEFF CARDON

Professor of Biology and Chemistry
Teaches courses in biology, biochemistry and molecular biology, and chemistry, including Cell and Molecular Biology, Microbiology and Organic Chemistry. He is involved in research on viruses and biofilms. Ph.D., molecular biology, University of California, Los Angeles.

BARBARA CHRISTIE-POPE

Professor of Biology
Teaches courses in biology, and biochemistry and molecular biology, including Neurobiology, Immunology, and Human Anatomy and Physiology. Ph.D., pharmacology, University of South Alabama.

MARTY CONDON

Professor of Biology
Teaches courses in biology and biochemistry and molecular biology, including Biological Problems, Diversity: an Evolutionary Perspective, Evolution, and Plant Morphology. Ph.D., University of Texas.



forensic chemistry, medical anthropology, health economics, and global health.

The activities and support from Dimensions allows students to integrate their studies in the liberal arts with their interests in the healthcare and health sciences fields. While at Cornell, students come to understand the importance of empathy and communication, of discipline and creativity, and of individual initiative and teamwork associated with any successful healthcare career.

Dimensions supports a wide range of opportunities in and beyond the classroom, including interdisciplinary courses, research opportunities, internships at leading institutions, workshops and seminars, assistance with graduate school preparation, and more. The program is supported by a full-time associate director and a faculty advisor.

BENEFITS OF ONE COURSE AT A TIME

The One Course curriculum allows for intensive engagement in every aspect of study—labs last for a whole block without interruption and small classes mean easy access to faculty and interactive group work. Each classroom and lab becomes a learning community in which students get to focus, discuss, and question the material to facilitate deep understanding. That's true whether the class is an intensive lab science course, a social science discussion, or a survey of historical literature.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Dimensions provides funding for students to work alongside active researchers in the biomedical sciences and to intern alongside healthcare professionals. Our students have researched and interned in:

- Neuroscience at the University of Chicago
- Biotechnology at the University of Maryland
- Nutrition and pediatrics at the Baylor College of Medicine
- Chemistry at the Mayo Clinic
- Pediatrics and orthopedics at the Children's Hospital in Aurora, Colorado
- Cardiology, neuroscience, and pharmacology at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
- Healthcare administration at the Thedacare Center for Healthcare Value in Appleton, Wisconsin

CORNELL HEALTH PROFESSIONS SOCIETY (HPS)

Our students run an active Health Professions Society (HPS) that meets monthly and brings healthcare speakers to campus and participates in service projects. HPS and Dimensions, along with Cornell's chapter of the National Biology Honor Society, sponsor campus events such as blood

drives and educational programs such as Heart Day and Brain Awareness Day. In fact, Cornell College is one of the international sites used for observance of Brain Awareness Week.

INTERNSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Doctor of Physical Therapy programs are particularly interested in students who have relevant experience. Dimensions helps Cornell students find internships and job shadowing opportunities that allow them to fully explore their potential. In recent years, these have included:

- Integra Physical Therapy, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Class of 2020)
- Ability Physical Therapy, Mount Vernon, Iowa (Class of 2017)
- Iowa Physical Therapy, Mount Vernon, Iowa (Class of 2018)
- Mansfield Foundation Fellow in Physical Therapy, Twin Cities Orthopedics, Edina, Minnesota (Class of 2014)

AFTER CORNELL

Median pay for physical therapists in 2017 was \$86,850 per year. The number of physical therapy jobs is expected to expand 33% between 2016 and 2026, much faster than average.

CAREERS

Physical therapy technician, HCA Healthcare, Overland Park, Kansas (Class of 2018)

Physical therapist assistant, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Class of 2015)

Physical therapist, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Class of 2014)

Physical therapist, Muscatine Physical Therapy Services, Muscatine, Iowa (Class of 2011)

Physical therapist, Cass County Health System, Atlantic, Iowa (Class of 2010)

GRADUATE SCHOOLS

DPT, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa (Class of 2017)

DPT and Master of Science in Athletic Training (Dual program), St. Louis University, Missouri (Class of 2016)

M.S. in Athletic Training, University of Oregon, Oregon (class of 2016)

DPT, University of Iowa, Iowa (Class of 2015, 2009, 2008)

DPT, Denver University, Colorado (Class of 2015)

M.S. in Occupational Therapy, Florida Gulf Coast University (Class of 2015)

M.S. in Exercise and Nutrition Science, University of Tampa, Florida (Class of 2015)

JUSTUS HALLAM

Assistant Professor of Kinesiology

Teaches a range of courses including Systems Physiology, Exercise Physiology, Lifetime Fitness and Activity, Nutrition, Exercise Testing, and Prescription and Foundations in Kinesiology. Ph.D., kinesiology and immunobiology, Iowa State University.

CHRISTINA JOHNSON

Assistant Professor of Kinesiology

Teaches a range of courses including Psychology of Sport, Exercise Psychology, Sports in American Society, Foundations of Kinesiology, and Lifetime Fitness and Activity. Ph.D., psychology of sport and physical activity, University of Iowa.

CHARLEY LIBERKO

Professor of Chemistry

Teaches courses in organic chemistry, Chemical Principles I & II, and non-majors courses such as Chemistry of Artists' Materials. Ph.D., organic chemistry, University of Minnesota.

BRIAN NOWAK-THOMPSON

Associate Professor of Biology and Chemistry

Teaches courses in biology, chemistry, biochemistry and molecular biology, and environmental studies including Chemical Ecology, Foundations: Cellular Biology, and Biochemistry. Ph.D., organic chemistry, University of Minnesota.

CRAIG TEPPER

Professor of Biology

Teaches a range of courses in biology, including Genetics and the BMB elective Developmental Biology. He regularly leads a section of the Biological Problems capstone course in the Bahamas. Ph.D., molecular plant pathology, Utah State University.