

## **Update on Discussion with US News & World Reports re: rankings of physical therapist programs**

### **Educational Leadership Conference October 5, 2007**

#### History/Background

The Education Section and APTA initiated discussion with US News in 2004 following the release of the rankings of PT programs that year (PT programs are ranked every 4 years). Because the rankings had just been published, we mutually determined that it was not necessary to schedule a meeting for a few years, and we would do so prior to the 2008 rankings. Diane Jette and Janet Bezner met with US News in April 2007 to initiate conversation about improving the rankings. The results of that meeting were reported to the programs during the Section business meeting at annual conference in June and via the list serve prior to conference. An ad hoc group was formed after annual conference of individuals from AASIG who expressed interest in determining if we could provide data to US News and what data would be appropriate to include in the rankings. The group created a proposal that was shared with US News on September 19, 2007.

#### US News Survey

US News ranks graduate programs using two processes: 1) Using a peer survey sent to each program in a discipline requesting two individuals (program director and another person the program director selects) to rank each of the programs in the discipline on overall academic excellence; and 2) Using a peer survey and a number of additional data points, including, for example, average undergraduate GPA, GRE scores, acceptance rate, NIH research grants, faculty/student ratio.

The programs for which US News uses additional data points include medicine, law, education, business and engineering. Other graduate degrees, like physical therapy, are ranked using the survey method only. US News has indicated to us that they would be willing to add data points to the PT rankings if the data could be provided to them, as they do not have the resources to collect it.

#### Proposed data points to add to PT rankings

The ad hoc group considered the following variables, collected in the Annual Accreditation Report, in the selection of appropriate data:

1. NPTE exam scores – average 3-year pass rate
2. Total cost for the entire program (AAR Question 16), using out of state values for public institutions, assuming a lower number yields a higher ranking (see Medicine ranking in US News)
3. The ratio of the number of applicants who met all admission requirements (37b)/number of accepted students who enrolled in the professional phase (37d), OR the ratio of the number of applicants (37a)/number of students offered a place (37c)
4. Overall GPA prior to enrollment in the professional phase (38b)
5. Total number of students in the professional phase (39 grand total)

6. Ratio of number of FTEs of core faculty (60c)/number of students in the professional phase (37d)
7. Ratio of the total number of peer reviewed articles accepted or published in the last year (65a)/number of core faculty (60a-61a)
8. Ratio representing the ethnic diversity of the students (like the table in the US News for Law programs) created from data from Question 40

After careful consideration, the consensus was to suggest the following data points to US News, which we did during our September 19 meeting:

1. NPTE 3-year average pass rate and/or the first year pass rate (both could be used in the formula to determine the ranking, most likely weighted differently, and the first year pass rate would not have to be published) (Outcome measure)
  2. The ratio of the number of applicants to the number offered a place (Selectivity measure)
  3. Overall GPA of enrolled students prior to enrollment in entry-level professional phase (Selectivity measure)
  4. Ratio of number of FTE core faculty to total number of students in the professional phase (Faculty resource measure)
- In addition, we discussed reporting (NOT using in the rankings), an indicator of ethnic diversity in enrolled students and in- and out-of-state tuition, to assist students in their decision about programs.

#### Additional information from US News

- The peer review survey will be mailed to programs in late October
- The 2008 rankings will be published in late March 2008
- If we decide to provide data to US News, the rankings may appear in the magazine and on their web site, or just on their web site
- In terms of the formula US News would create with the data points, selectivity measures would be weighted less than outcome measures because inputs are viewed as less important than outputs (input measures like selectivity are included in the formulas because they are data students find valuable)

#### Decision from AASIG members

During the discussion at the AASIG business meeting on Saturday, October 6, we would like to answer any questions about APTA providing these data to US News for use in the rankings. Members of the ad hoc group will be present to share the rationale for selecting the data points proposed. Included in the discussion will be mechanisms for programs to opt out or opt in.