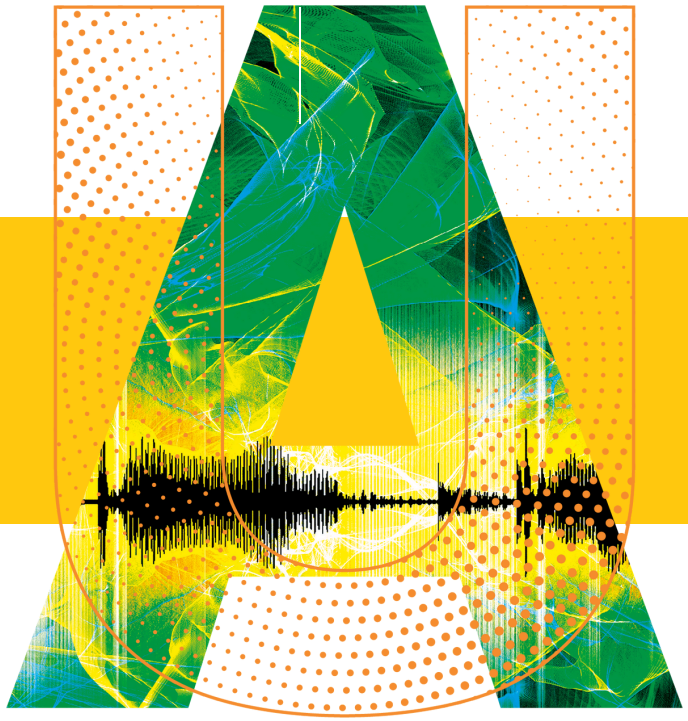
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Department of Physical Therapy
Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
College of Health Sciences



SEPTEMBER 2025

Contents

Chair + Associate Chair's Message 3
Highlights 4
Awards + Honours 5
Department Highlights 6
Program Highlights 7
Research Highlights 8
PT Teaching Clinic Update 9

Chair + Associate Chair's Message

The 2024-25 academic year was filled with highs and lows for our faculty members and department. We mourned the loss of our colleague and friend Dr. Greg Kawchuk who passed away on April 27, 2025. Greg joined our department in 2004 and was a valued colleague and innovative researcher. A celebration of life was held July 11, 2025. This was a heartbreaking event for Greg's family, friends, colleagues, and our department.

We celebrated our 70th anniversary as a department, successful accreditation (6 years), the re-opening of our Augustana satellite (this time with OT and SLP along with us) and an updated website. Crystal MacLellan became Program Director in January 2025 when Mark Hall was promoted to a Faculty position. Berni Martin announced her decision to retire, and we celebrated her career on June 5, 2025, with a well-attended afternoon tea. Berni was an important part of our department since 2005, focused on teaching, the professional PT program and continuing professional education (CPE) curricular development. She served in a variety of leadership positions including associate chair and program director, associate dean of professional programs, and CPE director.

Our training of future physical therapists continued in the broader community through clinical placements. We are immensely grateful for our clinical preceptors and facilities who willingly accept students and share fundamental knowledge, practical skills, and clinical wisdom.

We focused on our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Guided by new national physiotherapy curriculum standards, our faculty continued building relationships with Indigenous communities, participated in learning opportunities to build their cultural competence, and further Indigenized our curriculum.

We are thankful for our important community partnerships, including alumni, donors, and community instructors who support our department. We welcome input and feedback on all department activities. Please feel free to reach out anytime with questions, concerns, or ideas to help us improve. You can email Doug at doug.gross@ualberta.ca or Crystal at clmac@ualberta.ca.

Doug Gross
Chair

Crystal MacLellan
Associate Chair and Program Director

Exercise prescription isn't one-size-fits-all for cancer patients

Researchers have created a new framework to help clinicians effectively integrate the right kinds of exercise into cancer care at the right times to maximize benefits and minimize risks for patients.

The framework, called Exercise Across the Postdiagnosis Cancer Continuum (EPiCC), provides key terminology and a structured way of approaching the distinct role exercise has in cancer care, from treatment to supportive interventions.

Read the full story

On March 21, 2025 a day after spring equinox, the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine unveiled the Space of Truth and Reconciliation in Corbett Hall. The space supports the faculty's commitment to meaningful relationships with Indigenous partners and communities.

2024-25 HIGHLIGHTS

Our major accomplishment was successful accreditation, with full compliance and accreditation granted for six years. Interim evaluation for the Augustana program is scheduled for May 4 and 5, 2026.

Awards and Honours

- Lauren Beaupre - 2024 Barer-Flood Prize in Health Services and Policy Research, CIHR Institute of Health Services & Policy Research announcement
- Lauren Beaupre – Service recognition from the International Fracture Fragility Network who named an award after her – Lauren Beaupre Top Abstract Award
- Martin Ferguson-Pell – 2024 Winner of ASTech Award for Medical, Health-Care and Pharmaceuticals – Applications (Academic Collaboration)
- Victor Ezeugwu – Received the RMSA Teaching Award
- Erin McCabe – 2025 DIVERT Mental Health Fellowship (Early Career Investigators)
- Eric McCabe – Third Place Student Oral Presentation award – 2024 International Society for Quality of Life Research annual conference
- Eric Parent - received a Graduate Student Association 2025 Graduate Student Supervisor Award
- Heather Bredy – 2025 Innovative Teaching Award
- Mark Labrentz – 2025 Clinical Educator of the Year
- Gabriela Abbud, Crystal MacLellan and Mark Hall, 2024-25 Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund. Experiential Learning Activity to improve knowledge and attitudes of physiotherapy students toward people living with dementia
- Eric Parent and Mark Hall, 2024-25 Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund. Shaping the future of health education: AI-enhanced teaching and practice
- Heather Bredy - Received a Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL) iHUB grant Reducing Barriers to Clinical Placements in Underserved Communities to support placement opportunities with Big Horn Reserve. This funding supports students out on clinical placement.
- Doug Gross and team – Outstanding presentation award (specialty group) at World Physiotherapy Congress from the International Federation of PTs in Occupational Health and Ergonomics.
- For International Happiness Day (March 2025), Lana Vandenberghe received a Happiness Award and organized ice cream sandwiches/ popsicles for students.
- Karim Fouad - Craig H Neilsen Foundation for spinal cord injury research grant

94.3%

Pass rate for the written National Physiotherapy Competency Exam for 2024 (first-attempt). The pass rate for second attempt is 100%.

676	**Number of Placements** *(split placements count as 1 placement)*
255	**Unique placement sites**
669	**Unique CI's**

Academic year July 1 2024-June 30, 2025

Department Highlights

- Augustana Campus grand re-opening was celebrated in November 2024.
- The department celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2024. Media articles highlighted PT students, current staff, and emeritus professor Joan Loomis.
- The department hosted the inaugural Physical Therapy Legacy Lecture/ Celebration, Sept. 13, 2025. Speakers included one grad who is a former Olympic cyclist and an alumnus of our program who is on the national sledge hockey team. Both shared experiences receiving PT services and working as a clinician.
- We mourned the loss of our colleague and friend Greg Kawchuk. The memorial was July 11, 2025. This was a heartbreaking event for the department as we worked to support Greg's family, students and research program.
- Berni Martin announced her decision to retire, and we celebrated her career on June 5, 2025, with a well-attended celebratory afternoon tea.
- Mark Hall ended his term as associate chair and director of MScPT Program on Dec. 31, 2024, and Crystal MacLellan started a three-year term Jan. 1, 2025.
- Mitchel Mguni ended her position as PTA in the Student Clinic to pursue her MScPT at McMaster University.
- Erin McCabe started as an assistant professor, September 2024.
- Chris Zarski started as an associate teaching professor and Augustana coordinator, July 2024.
- Daniel Gillespie started as an assistant teaching professor, Augustana, July 2024.
- New non-departmentalized faculty members will join us starting July 1, 2025. This includes Keith Fenrich, David Bennett and Martin Ferguson-Pell.

BEYOND THE FINISH LINE:

OLYMPIC CYCLIST FINDS NEW CAREER TRACK

Two-time Olympian Allison Beveridge embarks on a new chapter, bringing her elite sports background to her practice as a physiotherapist.

Read the full story

Program Highlights

- The 2024-25 academic year, now well underway, started off well in August. We continue with a primarily blended learning/flipped classroom approach to program delivery with time on campus spent in labs or active learning in seminars and application of knowledge to cases.
- In August 2024, we welcomed students to 124 seats: 82 in Edmonton, 24 in Calgary and 16 in Augustana.
- The admissions process was revised to include CASPR and KIRA and was observed by a member of the U of A Senate.
- Migration to Canvas for Fall 2025 classes with Simple Syllabus Tool.
- Curriculum Re-Envisioning committee members (Marguerite Wieler, Berni Martin, Eric Parent, Mark Hall and Crystal MacLellan) are conducting curriculum evaluation and mapping.

Rehabilitation Medicine satellite program reopens at Augustana

Updated program expands to admit more students in a wider range of disciplines, building capacity in rural health.

Read the full story

Research Highlights

$30M	Ongoing principal and co-principal investigator funding
130	Peer-reviewed publications and manuscripts

Rehabilitation medicine student researches new treatments for spinal cord injuries

Donor supports grant experiential learning opportunities that push medical knowledge forward.

Read the full story

UPDATE FROM THE CORBETT HALL PHYSICAL THERAPY TEACHING CLINIC

Launched in 2009, the Corbett Hall Student Physical Therapy Clinic began as a not-for-profit centre offering care to University of Alberta students, staff, and select groups from the general public. Staffed by faculty members as part of their annual assignment, the clinic helped provide clinical placements for MScPT students and became a valuable resource for underserved populations. Since 2011, the clinic has succeeded in expanding clinical hours and weeks of operation, increased the number of clinical placements available to MScPT students, and adopted a model of accepting external placements to keep the clinic running when UA MScPT students are not on placement. We have also expanded programming and facilitated a number of clinical research projects.

In 2024-25, we developed a new business model and operating plan for the clinic and started a new grad mentorship program. Importantly, we changed our name from Student Clinic to Teaching Clinic to better reflect our activities. Future plans include amalgamating with the Alberta Cancer Exercise Program, opening a newly renovated high-performance lab, and participating in a reimagined Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine Interprofessional Clinic.

THANK YOU

The Department of Physical Therapy would like to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU to all the physical therapy clinicians who supervised students in our department.

Leading with
Purpose.
UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA
Department of Physical Therapy
Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
2-50 Corbell Hall
8205 114 Street
Edmonton, AB
Canada T6G 2G4
ualberta.ca/physical-therapy