

ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY

OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

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Life in Discovery



For Immediate Release:

Rosalind Franklin University Physical Therapy Graduate Designs a Patient-Centered Career, Launches a Clinic of His Own



NORTH CHICAGO, IL – A life-long runner and an experienced marathoner, Rick Hartmann knows what it means to work through pain.

But as a physical therapist, Hartmann’s goal is to find a treatment plan that will allow patients with athletic injuries, orthopedic injuries or chronic conditions to work without pain.

“I’m a runner, and I’ve always been interested in fitness,” Hartmann said. “I wanted to find a way to use that interest to help people.”

When Hartmann first attended college, his school did not offer a physical therapy degree program. Instead, he studied sports medicine, earning a master's degree in athletic training from Illinois State University.

“I worked for about five years as an athletic trainer, the majority of that time with high school and college athletes,” he said. He worked with student athletes in all of the major school sports, from football and basketball to track and field

But he found the field limiting, with too much time spent following young athletes to games on nights and weekends. After hearing colleagues talking about the strength of the Physical Therapy program at Rosalind Franklin University, he decided to return to school to study toward a new degree.

Hartmann graduated from Rosalind Franklin in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical therapy.

After several years working in outpatient orthopedics and sports medicine, Hartmann found he still wanted more from his career. He wanted more one-on-one time with patients, more flexibility to set up individualized treatment plans for his clients.

Then in 2006, Hartmann launched his own clinic – Synergy Physical Therapy – in Libertyville, Ill. His goal is to keep the clinic small, believing that best meets the needs of clients.

“It is one-on-one therapy. There are no assistants working with patients,” he said. “Treatment sessions can be up to an hour or more if they need to be.”

Hartmann works with orthopedic patients recovering from knee replacements or ligament repairs, with athletes coming back from injuries, or people recovering from accidents.

A specialty is working with patients with chronic pain from multiple injuries suffered in serious accidents or chronic conditions. His patients have ranged from a six-year-old grade schooler to seniors in their 90s, from young professionals to blue collar workers and homemakers.

“It's everybody really,” he said.

He also works with runners, doing videotape analysis of runners' gaits to spot movement problems that can lead to injury or pain.

Hartmann has kept his ties with Rosalind Franklin University's Physical Therapy program, regularly taking on students from the program as interns.

Roberta J. Henderson, PT, PhD, chair of the Department of Physical Therapy, said the university currently has 106 entry-level students, another 50 in advanced programs.

“We have a long history of excellence in educating skilled physical therapy health care professionals that have gone forward to become leaders in the physical therapy profession and in interprofessional health care delivery,” Henderson said.

Rosalind Franklin University also offers a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, the fifth in the nation, with a curriculum that emphasizes both clinical and research content and has inspired other DPT curricula in the United States. The PT faculty include members who are certified by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialists in five specialty areas.

The RFUMS Physical Therapy program was one of the earliest programs in the nation to offer a post-professional Transition Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

Hartmann said felt the university helped him create the career he was looking for. “I really have no interest in being a big, corporate physical therapy place,” he said. “I want this to be a small business with an excellent reputation for quality care.”

About Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science is a national leader in interprofessional medical and healthcare education, comprising the Chicago Medical School, College of Health Professions, Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine and School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Rosalind Franklin University recently received approval for its new doctoral program in Interprofessional Healthcare Studies – the first in Illinois – and has launched a new master in science program in Psychology Clinical Counseling in fall 2008.

There are more than 16,000 RFUMS graduates in the United States and worldwide.