



Physiotherapy in British Columbia: Our History

Joint Project between Retired Physiotherapists Group
And the Physiotherapy Association of B.C. (PABC)

Degree Completion Program 1975 to 1985 UBC School of Rehabilitation Medicine

The education of physiotherapists in Canada has undergone two major changes over the past decades. The first was the move from a diploma credential to a baccalaureate degree and the second is the change to the master's entry-level qualification. Changes at the University of British Columbia (UBC) are typical of many programmes in Canada.

Joan Cleather writes in her book, "Head, Heart and Hands: The Story of Physiotherapy in Canada" on page 128, "In 1974, the CPA had decided to institute a new qualification for membership: a baccalaureate degree was to be required of all new graduates of Canadian Programs." This did not happen immediately, but everyone knew it was coming.

The following information comes from Master of Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum Document 2010 (<http://med-fom-osot.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2013/05/Curriculum-2012.pdf>)

"1961 The School of Rehabilitation Medicine is established at UBC and admits the first class of students into a combined occupational therapy/physiotherapy program. Dr. Brock Fahrni, Geriatrician, is part-time Director, and the programs are led by Miss Margaret R. Hood, Head, Division of Occupational Therapy, and Miss Jane Hudson, Head, Division of Physiotherapy. A renovated army hut serves as the physical plant.

1964 First graduating class of 16 students, granted a physical medicine certificate. Subsequent to graduation the class is "retroactively" granted a Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation (BSR) degree.

1978 Dr. Fahrni retires and Miss Hood is acting Director for one year before she retires.

1979 Dr. Tali Conine, a physiotherapist by profession, is appointed the first full-time Director of the School.

1980 The School moves out of the huts into the new Koerner Pavilion, the acute care unit of UBC Hospital. It shares the third floor with the School of Nursing.

1985 Last graduating class in the BSR (combined occupational therapy and physiotherapy) program. At this time, there were 40 students admitted annually to the combined degree program. Dr. Conine completes her term as Director.

The BSR(OT) and BSR(PT) degree completion program also concludes. This was a one-year program for diploma graduates to obtain a bachelor's degree. The program recognized the diploma as equivalent to 3 years of study toward the bachelor's degree. The (OT) or (PT) designation reflected that the BSR was not a combined degree for degree completion graduates; their diplomas were in a single discipline."

Louise MacGregor and Hazel Southard, together with the help of the UBC faculty had set up a Degree Completion Program to be offered from 1975 to 1985. All physiotherapists with a



Physiotherapy in British Columbia: Our History
*Joint Project between Retired Physiotherapists Group
And the Physiotherapy Association of B.C. (PABC)*

diploma were invited to upgrade to a Baccalaureate degree. It was recognized that, in the future, having a degree in B.C. might be helpful when applying for Leadership positions.

In the sixties and seventies, foreign trained Physiotherapists with diplomas and certificates mostly came from countries where the training was recognized by APMP (the forerunner of CPTBC) and they were allowed to work in BC.

All physiotherapists with diplomas were invited to apply for the Degree Completion program. Recognition was given for their diplomas and they needed to have passed at least one A level at High School and provide their transcripts as proof. For the program at UBC, there was a requirement to complete 18 units at a 300 level. Of these 18 units, the three compulsory courses were Anatomy & Neuroanatomy and Statistics.

The remainder of the courses were electives at not less than the 300 level. Most students were part time as many were working full time as Physiotherapists and could only take classes in the evening.

Anatomy:

Instructor was Hazel Southard

Dissection labs at the School of Medicine held on Saturday mornings

The Limbs were kept in cold storage and shared between the students.

Dissection of muscles, nerves and the lymphatics were included

Neuro Anatomy:

Instructor was Louise McGregor

Amazingly, we covered this entire complex subject without the help of computers.

We studied slices of brain in formaldehyde and studied the Nervous System in depth.

Statistics:

Instructor was Dr. Tali Conine

Part of the course included conducting a Research Project with a fellow student.

Electives:

All students chose their own topics hence broadening their general knowledge.